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THE METHODIST;

OR,

INCIDENTS AND CHARACTERS FROM LIFE

IN THE

BALTIMORE CONFERENCE.

BY MIRIAM FLETCHER.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY W. P. STRICKLAND, D.D.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

NEW YORK :
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THE METHODIST.

CHAPTER I.

WELCOME HOME AGAIN.

"My home! the spirit of its love is breathing,
In every wind that plays across my track,
From its dear walls the very tendrils wreathing,
Seem with soft links to draw the wanderer back."

MRS. HEMANS.

ABOUT two hours' ride brought Harry within sight of Woodbury, and his heart bounded as he saw the well-known carriage of his grandfather standing near the hotel, for he doubted not that his mother had come to meet him. A few moments, and he sprang up the steps to receive and return the cordial embrace of Willie.

"Dearest Will, how are you? How are all?"

"All well, dear Harry, and some of us, at any rate, overjoyed to see you."

"Where is my mother?"

By this time they had reached the parlor, and the question was answered by that beloved mother herself, as she clasped her arms around his neck.

"I am here, my precious boy, and I thank the gracious Being that has permitted me once more to behold you."

They sat down together for a few moments, but it was

only to look in each other's faces. Words were inadequate to express the pure happiness of that meeting. Soon Tom, having arranged the luggage on the carriage, presented himself at the door, all shining with glad welcome to his "Mars Harry," who quickly came forward with extended hand to meet it.

"Why, Tom, my good fellow, I am very glad to see you again. How are you?"

"Right well, thank you, Mars Harry. How does ye do yerself, sir?"

"Never better, Tom; and now, if you are ready, we will be at home as soon as you will take us there."

"I'll do dat, sir, and plenty folks dar be glad to see you, sir."

"Not more glad than I shall be to see them, Tom. So let us go."

During the drive, Harry had time to observe Willie more closely, and was pained to see that when the glow of excitement began to fade, he looked both thinner and paler than when they parted in the fall. But, as he said he was well, Harry refrained from any remark.

As they approached the Lodge, a throng of young darkies who had waylaid the carriage, ran out to catch a smile from Mars Harry, and then cutting across a meadow were ready to open the great gate. Harry had a word for each, and an inquiry for daddies and mammies at home, that sent them exulting to their several cabins with the news that Mars Harry had come; that they had seen him, and "he didn't look handsome slow."

Mrs. Rodney was still in Baltimore, but Mr. Stuart, George and Virginia were with Col. Hunter to receive the returned wanderer, and a group of happier faces had rarely assembled round the ample board of Hunter's

Lodge. Even the usually sad face of its master caught some of the rays that brightened all around, for Harry sat beside him—the same Harry that, in his gloomy forebodings, he had never expected to see again.

There was quite a contest the next morning as to who should have possession of Harry. It was finally left to him to decide. He accordingly gave the first hours of the morning to his grandfather, promising to go with Willie wherever he wished after dinner, and with Mr. Stuart the next day to see some improvements in his little church, and to listen to all the joint plans of himself and Willie for the benefit of the neighborhood, as soon as he had time.

Mrs. Bradford put in no claims, but was not alone in longing for the quiet evening hour on the dear old sofa with her two beloved boys, where heart had so often spoken to heart without restraint. And again, after the too sensitive Willie had gone to his rest, to that complete unbosoming between mother and son, which could take place only between themselves alone.

Fleetfoot, who had been specially petted for the sake of his master, was brought out for Harry to ride. The sight of his old favorite called up the remembrance of the snow-storm, and the faithful services of old Pilot, who was left at Brookton, to be disposed of as circumstances should direct. Still Fleetfoot had been the playmate of his boyhood, while he was yet but a colt. He plainly recognized the familiar voice and caressing hand of his master, and, responding by a low whinny, rested his head for a moment on Harry's shoulder with manifest satisfaction. Another affectionate greeting, and not a little prized.

It had always been a gratification to Col. Hunter to

find Harry so much interested in agricultural pursuits, and he now unfolded to him various plans of improvement, seeming to take it for granted that he would be the one to carry them forward, when he should himself be gone. The fearful ravages made by death in his family had so broken and disordered his mind, that his own speedy dissolution and that of Willie, the last lineal descendant of the Hunters, was the one idea that absorbed his thoughts. After mentioning several changes that would be advantageous, he called Harry's attention to the ample barns that stood before them.

"Harry, my son," this was his chosen method of addressing his grandson, especially when they were alone. "Harry, my son, I think you will need a new roof to the large barn soon, and an addition to the stable would not be amiss."

"If you would like it, grandfather, why not have it attended to at once. While I am at home, I may be able to assist you in planning."

"No, my son. They will last as long as I shall. I do not wish to make any changes myself."

"What does Willie say to it?"

"Ah, poor Willie! I do not trouble him about such things. He fatigues himself entirely too much without that. Poor boy! he cannot stay much longer with us. Do you not think he declines rapidly?"

"Dear grandfather, I cannot bear to hear you talk so. Willie does not look quite as well as he did in the fall, but I hope the fine spring weather will revive him again."

"Oh, Harry, I do not know," he replied, with a deep sigh. "The flowers of Hunter's Lodge never revive. There they lie withered and dead," and he pointed with his riding-whip in the direction of the graveyard, "and

there my poor blighted Willie and his father will soon sleep with them."

Harry looked at his grandfather. Tears were fast dropping over his furrowed cheeks. The sight nearly overcame his own fortitude. He replied by pointing in his turn towards the last resting-place of the family, and asking:

"Are angels there?
Slumbers, raked up in dust, ethereal fire?"

"I know they are not there," Col. Hunter rejoined, as he struggled to regain composure. "But oh, Harry! where are they? I cannot see beyond the insatiable grave. They are gone, and I dare not hope to see them again."

Something in these last words seemed to imply a desire for light, and a humble fear of his own unfitness to go to them. Harry longed to impart some spiritual consolation to the bleeding heart, but his grandfather had never before spoken to him so openly on the subject of his sorrows, and he hesitated how to frame his language to suit the relative positions they occupied. He knew that his mother and Willie often spoke on these subjects with him. While he paused, almost in doubt how it would be received, they came in sight of the quarters of the negroes, and Col. Hunter resumed his discourse.

"Now these quarters, Harry, you see, they are getting out of repair. I should like to have you build a new cabin for Jack and Letty. They are getting old now, and have served us faithfully. I am sure you will take care of them as long as they live, and have all the cabins repaired, as they need it. I say these things to you, my son, because I know you will respect my wishes."

Harry was glad to hear these expressions of considera-

tion for the comfort of the servants, but equally troubled that they should be addressed to him.

"My dear grandfather," he replied, "you know it would be my earnest desire to carry out your wishes in every respect, but I beg of you to take a different view of it. I sincerely hope you may live to put all your kind plans in operation yourself."

"No, Harry, it cannot be. We are passing away, and you must not deny me the comfort of doing, through you, what I may not have time to perform myself."

Harry saw that it was in vain to oppose this fixed idea, so he forbore to attempt it farther, and listened to various directions and suggestions with affectionate deference, till they arrived at home.

Mr. Stuart and Willie had been much interested in a school that they had established for the negroes of Hunter's Lodge, and the adjoining farms. For a time the prospect had been quite encouraging, but recently the owner of some that attended, had become displeased with them, and in the perversity of an angry spirit, attributed whatever faults they committed to the school, saying contemptuously, that they were so taken up with their *learning*, that work was neglected. Consequently he had forbidden them to attend the last few Sabbaths. Willie had tried to convince him that the fault did not lie in the school, but all in vain. Though not intending to be disrespectful, his language and manner were so intemperate, that Willie came home deeply grieved. Mr. Stuart had met with no better success, and the unfortunate boys had to be given up to their ignorance, and left to run about on the Sabbath, at the mercy of any temptation that fell in their way.

This trial was just now pressing upon Willie's ardent

feelings, and in part accounted for his looking so bad. After he had confided his trouble to Harry, and imbibed some measure of his hopeful spirit, he was willing to believe that time and the results of the teaching on others might produce an effect where argument and persuasion had failed.

Mr. Stuart exhibited his various improvements to Harry with the assurance of his entire sympathy. The principal of them was a most comfortable study connected with his vestry. This arrangement obviated the inconvenience of having his parishioners calling at Glen Cottage on every occasion when they wished to consult him. Here the two young men spent many hours together, sometimes in reading or writing, sometimes in friendly converse.

CHAPER II.

DIFFERENCE NOT DISCORD.

"Let us not waste the vigor of our minds,
In acrimonious quarrel over creeds.
Not ours the business of dispute; but ours
The pleasing duty to find good in all;
And finding, recognize, and own in each,
A brotherhood no difference of faith
May set afar."

T. B. READ.

HARRY had several times observed in their most frank and confidential interviews, that a sudden shade of embarrassment would steal over Mr. Stuart's countenance, and seem to give a chill to the otherwise easy and delightful tone of their intercourse, but as it was generally transient, it left no abiding impression on his mind.

On the Saturday morning after he returned to Hunter's Lodge, Harry tapped at the door of the study.

"Come in Harry, and always welcome," was the cheerful response of his friend, as he continued writing with his back to the entrance.

"Thank you," said Harry, "but how did you know it was I?"

"Because I should know your springing footstep if I did not hear it again for twenty years."

"Well, I have to be springy this morning, for I find I must try to preach at Mt. Carmel, to-morrow, and I

want to consult some of your books. Where is Olshausen? I saw it in here yesterday."

"There it is, on the table. But sit down, I want to say something to you that has been on my mind ever since you came home, and indeed, before."

"Ah? nothing that gives you pain, I hope?"

"Well, yes it does, for I fear it pains you."

"Oh, if that is all, you need not distress yourself, for I suppose the pain of which we are not in the slightest degree conscious, cannot be very acute."

"I am glad if that is the case. But how does it appear to you that I cannot ask you to preach for me?"

Harry laughed. "And is that all that has made you look so solemn, now and then, when we have talked on the subject of preaching?"

"That is all. But I have feared you would misunderstand it, and attribute it to a want of brotherly feeling."

"Then do not give yourself another moment's uneasiness about it, for in the first place, you know I have not yet any authority, beyond a license, to preach at all, and should much prefer that my friends would let me listen to others. In the next place, I should think you wanting in consistency if you should invite me to fill your pulpit, even after I am ordained."

"You surprise me, my dear Harry. On what grounds does it appear in that light to you?"

"On the ground of my respect for the conscientious opinions of any Christian people. I used to feel greatly troubled that Christians of different names could not agree on all points. I have, for instance, some friends among the Baptists that I value very highly, and will

not place second to any for true piety, and soundness of judgment; I used to think their close communion was mere blindness and narrow-minded bigotry. But I am of a very different opinion now."

"I wish you would make it appear anything else to me."

"You are not willing to receive an unbaptized person to the communion, are you?"

"Of course not."

"Very well. They do not conscientiously believe that infants are fit subjects for baptism. Hence they are only consistent with their principles when they withhold the sacrament of the supper from those who have only received it in that mode."

"And you are equally liberal towards, us when we cavil at your ordination. Is that it?" with a smile.

"Certainly. We are conscientious. So are you. Some of you believe in the unbroken succession of your ordination from the Apostles; others, and among them some of your wisest divines, think the point cannot be sustained. At any rate, I know that your own opinion is that we have not the true ordination. You are perfectly honest in that opinion. It would therefore be inconsistent, and absolutely wrong for you to ask any one to preach in your pulpit that you consider unqualified. Instead of being offended, I respect you for acting in accordance with that belief. These differences are a very natural effect of the fallen condition of man, and as such to be lamented. But He who brings light out of darkness, good out of evil, has so ordered it, that the very weakness and perversity of our mental and spiritual vision shall result in blessings. Just as

the opposition between Jews and Christians has tended to keep the canon of Scripture inviolate; so the jealousy of the different denominations of Christians saves us from sinking into apathy, or running into error, by causng a ceaseless appeal to the written word, as well as a watchful care over its integrity."

"My dear friend, I thank you for thus relieving my mind, and removing the only barrier to our friendly intercourse. But how many of your brethren would join you in giving us credit for so much honesty in our views?"

"More of them perhaps than you are aware of. And now you must give yourself no more trouble about not inviting me to preach for you. But I must get ready for to-morrow. Where did you say I could find Olshausen?"

The first sermon that a young minister is called to preach among his own relations and friends is, at best, something of an ordeal; and so it proved to Harry. He had often taken part in social meetings when they were present, but this was a different thing. Now it became generally known that he was to preach, and all were desirous to hear him, especially as it might be a long time before another opportunity would occur.

The little hill-side chapel, called Mt. Carmel, was filled to overflowing. Mr. Preston was there, for he knew that Harry was to be at home at this time, and had taken care so to arrange his quarterly meetings, that this, the last in the conference year, was held at Mt. Carmel. Harry felt it a sensible relief to have him commence the exercises for him. It gave him time to still his fluttering heart, and when he arose to announce his text, it was

with perfect self-possession, though the full color did not return to his cheek till he had proceeded some sentences in his exordium. Then again his composure had nearly deserted him, for as he looked around over the audience, he saw one and another, and another, that he knew belonged to Mr. Stuart's flock. He was surprised, for it seemed as if none were missing. Presently his eye rested upon Mr. Stuart himself. He was still more surprised, but after a scarcely perceptible hesitation his subject so completely absorbed his faculties, as to exclude everything else.

Any one not as accustomed to Methodist usages as Harry was, might have found it difficult to preserve a fitting gravity, by reason of the various demonstrations of feeling in the gallery. In the corner, long appropriated to the patriarch of the sable population, honest Jack, sat that worthy, rubbing his toil-hardened hands, and turning up his eyes till only the white was visible in strong contrast with the ebony of his grotesquely cut features, twisting and working as he struggled to express or suppress the emotions of his devout and affectionate heart. Noble old man! Type of many of the long suffering race of Ham! Surely if the curse still rests on thee, in the degradation of thy position, the love of Him whose compassions fail not, has hid the antidote in thy humble, loving heart, turning that curse into a blessing, and causing the wrath of man to praise him. Not far off sat Letty, as usual in any excitement of feeling, rocking herself back and forward, with now and then an emphatic shake of the head, and true to her woman's nature, weeping out her joy and thanksgiving that she had lived to see her dear child stand up in the name of his Master to proclaim the glad tidings of salvation. It

was more than she could contain. Words would come:

"My own Miss Sophy's chile! Oh, dat my own sweet mistuss could see dis day! But, bless de Lord, she do see it, and rejoice in it too. Bless de Lord! Dat's enough. Now, dis ole 'oman ready to go home. Bless de Lord!"

Many around could sympathize with her, and even where the devotional spirit was wanting, kind hearts grew warmer, and trembling lips responded: "Ah, yes! dat's Mars Harry Bradford. He always was de finest boy in de county, everybody knows."

These expressions, though audible to those in the gallery, did not reach the ear of their youthful subject, save in a confused murmur; but he could see the faces of his faithful friends, and far from being interrupted by such demonstrations, they cheered and strengthened him.

Harry had taken for his text the words, "Oh, come let us sing unto the LORD; let us make a joyful noise unto the rock of our salvation." He spoke of the nature of that salvation; then of what constitutes its strength. Its origin in the counsels of the Trinity; the character of God, his attributes all combining to form that strength. Then of man's condition and prospects in the rejection of such a salvation, and the blessedness that follows a sincere acceptance of it. Rejoicing a necessary effect of a full appreciation and appropriation of it.

On this foundation there was ample space for deep and weighty thought, as well as eloquent appeal; and there was enough of both in the discourse, notwithstanding the youth of the speaker, to fill the hearts of believers with solemn joy, and to make others, who were still floating on the treacherous waves of their own righteousness, to trem-

ble, and almost resolve never to rest till they found their feet on the Rock of Ages.

When Harry came down from the pulpit, he found so many to speak to, that before he could break away, the carriage had gone on and Col. Hunter with it. Mr. Stuart was waiting for him, and they rode on together towards home. Several others were with them, but they soon turned off on their different ways, leaving the two young men alone.

"Mr. Stuart," said Harry, as soon as the last horseman was out of hearing, "do tell me what this means."

"Means?" was the laughing reply, "why it means that my people all preferred to listen to you to-day, and I was delighted to make one among them myself. Now do not look so unbelieving—it is just so. I started for church this morning—sermon in pocket—all ready to do my best; but I met carriage after carriage, hurrying off in the direction *from* the church. I was too polite to ask the meaning of it at first. When I did venture, I was informed that Mr. Bradford was going to preach and all were going to hear him. Well, I could see no objection, and thought I should like very much to do the same. However, I went on to the church. The few that were there, seemed to be holding a consultation, in which I joined. It ended by one and all proceeding to Mt. Carmel. So you may thank us for helping to fill your house, and indeed excluding many, I doubt not, that had a better right to the seats." *

Another laugh, in which both joined, terminated the conversation as they rode up the avenue to the Lodge.

Col. Hunter did not make his appearance till dinner, and then seemed inclined to say no more than his posi-

* Fact.

tion as host and carver required; but the peculiar tenderness of his manner towards his grandson, did not escape the notice of those most interested. Several persons dined with them, and the conversation was general, to the great relief of Harry, for he only desired such criticism as would benefit his future ministry, and that he knew he should receive from his mother and Mr. Preston as soon as opportunity offered.

After tea, Willie appropriated Harry to himself for a quiet stroll in the twilight, and led him to their favorite resort, the graveyard. The season was yet too early for it to wear the beauty of its summer aspect, but the dry leaves had been carefully removed, and the grass was quite green. A few pale flowers looked up from the base of the marbles, where they had sheltered themselves from the wind. The willows were just putting forth their first tender buds, and as they passed through the iron gate, the breeze sent long, swaying branches towards them in melancholy greeting. But the hearts of the young men were not melancholy. Some of their sweetest and tenderest hours had been spent in this lovely spot.

"Harry," said Willie, as he gathered in his hand some of the waving pendants, and pressed them caressingly to his face, "I love these trees better every year, as the time draws nearer when I shall 'lay my garments by' in this dear spot. You know how father has always shunned it. Well, now, he often comes here, and though he is so sad, he seems to love it almost as much as we do. Harry, I do think he is changed. He is so much more willing to let us talk to him about religion, and I know he reads the Bible often now. Oh, if you could only be sent to this circuit! I think it would be a

blessing. I saw that your sermon this morning made a deep impression on him, for when he came to help sister Sophy into the carriage, he smiled and said, 'Sophy, he is a noble boy;' but his lips trembled and his eyes were full of tears. Oh, dear Harry! how much good that sermon did me. How my soul rests on the *strength* of that salvation. Do you not think Mr. Preston could have you sent here?"

"Perhaps he could, dear Willie; but would you not rather have me go where the Lord sends me?"

Willie clasped the arm he held more closely, and sighed; but as he looked up in the loving eyes that were bent upon him, he answered, "Oh, yes, he knows best. We had better leave it to him."

The stars had begun to look out as they slowly turned from the sacred inclosure, and sought the cabins of the negroes. Stopping a few moments at the different doors, and sometimes entering, they exchanged kind or instructive words with all, and at last came to that nearest the Lodge occupied by Jack and Letty.

The door, as usual, stood open, though the coolness of the evening air made the warmth and glow of the fire acceptable. The old people received their young masters with respectful tenderness, for their hearts were still solemnized by the words they had listened to in the morning.

Jack met them in the middle of the floor, and taking both of Harry's hands in his, a few words of eloquent praise went up from his full heart, that the Lord had chosen his young servant in the morning of his days, to bear his life-giving message to a world dead in trespasses and sins. The hearty "Amen" of Harry was echoed by Willie and Letty, and then they all sat down in silence.

Poor old Letty sat rocking herself, tears taking the place of words. After a while she looked up and said, "Mars Harry, what you s'pose make me cry?"

"I do not know if I can tell, dear mammy, any more than I can what makes me feel like crying with you. Perhaps it is because we all love each other."

"Ah, my blessed chile, dat's it—leastways part of it. But, Mars Harry, when I see how de Lord is preparing you to take de rule of dese people, and be a blessing to 'em, my poor ole heart almost break, trying to thank Him."

"Oh, mammy," said Harry, glancing uneasily at Willie's placid face, "you know it is not at all likely that I shall be placed near home. Grandfather and Willie will care for the people better than I can."

"Yes, honey, I know all 'bout dat. But don't be troubled; Mars Willie ain't troubled—is ye, honey? We often talk 'bout dese tings. And Mars Davy, he told Jack, t'other day, he not got long to stay here wid us; and as for Mars Willie, poor chile, he can't manage all dese people; besides, he talk all de time like he had de warning, too. My dear, when people get dat warning dey can't stay down here, no how."

Harry scarcely knew how to receive this openly expressed opinion on all sides, that he must be master of Hunter's Lodge. He had chosen the portion of Levi—the Lord God of Israel—for his inheritance, and he felt that his choice had received the sanction of the Highest. The thought of being compelled to give it up was almost more than he could bear.

Willie felt the cloud that came over him, and tried to comfort him, reminding him of his own words in the graveyard. But anybody's cross is easier to bear than

our own, as every one has at some time or other experienced, and it was a little while before Harry could school himself into entire submission.

Jack asked him to pray with them before he left. He read a psalm from his pocket Bible, and then they all joined in singing a hymn. As he offered up the evening sacrifice of prayer and praise in the humble cabin of old Jack, he felt that the religion of the cross, thus elevating the poor slave, and humbling the proud master, was the portion that his soul desired, and he felt constrained to say:

"Give what Thou wilt, without Thee we are poor,
And with Thee rich, take what Thou wilt away."

CHAPTER III.

CONFERENCE.

"No foot of land do I possess
No cottage in this wilderness
A poor wayfaring man,
I lodge awhile in tents below,
Or gladly wander to and fro,
Till I my Canaan gain.

"Nothing on earth I call my own;
A stranger, to the world unknown,
I all their goods despise.
I trample on their whole delight,
And seek a city out of sight,
A city in the skies."

Several letters had been received from Mrs. Rodney, urging her niece to accompany Harry to Baltimore. Mr. Stuart, Virginia, and George were, as usual, ready to do all in their power to supply her place to her father and Willie. Harry would listen to no excuses. He knew the sacrifice she made in giving him up to the itinerant ministry, and was resolved that they should be together whenever it was possible. So, with a glad heart, she wrote, accepting the invitation of her aunt. Mr. and Mrs. Preston were going at the same time, which made the journey still more agreeable.

They reached Baltimore the evening before the opening of the conference, and were warmly welcomed by Mrs. Rodney, her son and his wife. The latter were quite anxious to see their cousins, having been spending

the season at Cape May when they passed through the city on their way to Niagara.

During the evening, Harry was closely watched by Mrs. Rodney, in order to find out whether circuit riding had effected the change she had predicted. Alas! for poor human nature. At first she actually felt vexed to find him changed only for the better, more strikingly handsome, more manly and dignified in manners. But to do her justice, the vexation was instantly swept away by the pleasure and pride she could not but feel in noticing the impression he so evidently made on the mind of her son. They had not met for several years.

"Well, mother," said he, as soon as their guests had retired to their rooms, "I begin to think you made a great mistake in not sending me out on a circuit. Perhaps if you had adopted that plan, I might have been almost as handsome as Harry. Do you not think I had better offer myself to the brethren now? It may not be too late."

Mrs. Rodney laughed at the idea, but she was used to her son's teasing, and was far from insensible to the implied compliment to Harry. "Oh, Hunter," she replied, "how can you be so ridiculous? You know Harry was always a remarkably handsome and intelligent boy. I am only thankful that the odious circuit has not made a complete clown of him. How does he strike you, Elizabeth? You have never seen him before."

"Oh, I am perfectly dazzled. I shall invite him to walk down Market street with me to-morrow, and call him 'Cousin Harry,' most distinctly, whenever there is a chance for anybody to hear." They all laughed, as with this speech they separated.

At an early hour in the morning, Harry took his

mother and Mrs. Hunter Rodney to Wesley Chapel, where the conference was to meet, and secured comfortable front seats for them in the gallery. There with great delight they watched the assembling of the preachers.

Most of them had not met since the last conference. Some had been enjoying the refinements and comparative ease of city stations. Others, far out on remote districts and circuits, had been battling with storm and tempest, struggling with hardship and privation, to carry the message of salvation to the perishing. What wonder that the latter were received by the former, who had often endured the same, with every demonstration of joyful affection, variously manifested, according to temperament. A cordial embrace was sometimes accompanied by joyous laughter—sometimes by subdued tones, dewy eyes, and smiles quivering with tender sympathy for him who had gone with unmurmuring self-devotion, perhaps with feeble health and large family, to the most unpromising field, and now returned to give an account of his stewardship.

The scene was becoming too attractive for Harry to resist, and he went down stairs. Mr. Preston and Mr. Lanning were sitting together, and he joined them. The ladies could see them where they sat, and a momentary lull permitted them to catch the voice of Mr. Preston, as he extended his hand to Harry, saying: "And here he is now."

"Do you hear that, Cousin Sophy?" exclaimed Mrs. Rodney with animation. "They have been talking about Harry, and now do you see how pleased they look? I wish I could hear what they say. I am so glad I came, for I never saw people so full of brotherly love in my life."

Mrs. Bradford smiled but did not feel very talkative, and her gay companion, needing no winding up, rattled on.

"There are a great many handsome men here, but I do not see one that can compare with Harry. Cousin Sophy, it must make you very happy to see how everybody admires him."

Mrs. Bradford smiled again, but before she could speak, another incident drew the attention of the lively lady, and she cried out:

"Oh, who is that fine old gentleman that they all rise to receive with so much respect? Oh, they are introducing Harry. Do tell me if you know him?"

Mrs. Bradford was trying to command her voice and features, for the sight of the venerable man recalled too vividly the picture of her western home, with all its joys and sorrows. She had gone back to the hour when she had last seen him, as she stood beside her beloved Henry, presenting the little Emma in baptism. But this was no time for indulgence, and with an effort she composed herself, and replied to the question of her cousin.

"Yes, Elizabeth, I am sure it must be Bishop Roberts, but it is many years since I saw him last. He is so changed; but still the same."

Mrs. Rodney caught the first pause to say, "Then he must be changed for the better, for I seldom have seen a more charming face. How much those flowing snowy locks enhance the benignity of his aspect. What can he be saying to Harry? Something interesting, I know, for Harry's face is full of pleased emotion. I shall make him tell me every word of it at home."

Mrs. Bradford felt assured that it was of her husband the bishop spoke, but she replied not, save to hush the

volubility of her cousin as the bishop moved on towards the altar.

Even the light spirit of Mrs. Rodney was chastened at last into seriousness, when the multitude of full manly voices joined in singing:

"And are we yet alive,
And see each other's face!
Glory and praise to Jesus give,
For his redeeming grace!
Preserved by power divine
To full salvation here,
Again in Jesus' praise we join,
And in his sight appear.

"What troubles have we seen!
What conflicts have we passed!
Fightings without and fears within,
Since we assembled last;
But out of all the Lord
Hath brought us by his love;
And still he doth his help afford,
And hides our life above.

"Then let us make our boast
Of his redeeming power,
Which saves us to the uttermost,
Till we can sin no more.
Let us take up the cross,
Till we the crown obtain;
And gladly reckon all things loss,
So we may Jesus gain."

"Oh! Sophy," said Mrs. Rodney, in an emphatic whisper, while they were singing, "is not that grand?"

The mingled dignity and love that pervaded the assembly fell with power upon Harry's heart, filling it with emotions too deep for utterance. Singing was out

of the question for him. He could only stand with folded arms and closed eyes, holding his tumult of feeling in check, till the welcome call to prayer enabled him to cover his face.

During the prayer, other eyes than those of Harry overflowed with the acknowledgment of the gracious care that had watched over them in their various wanderings, and brought them to meet in peace and love, a band of brothers, again to renew the consecration of their all to the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom.

As the business proceeded, Mrs. Rodney again commenced her lively comments on the scene below.

"What has become of Harry? I have lost him. Sophy, do you see him?"

"Yes, he is on the other side of the house, nearly opposite to us, standing in the aisle."

"Oh! yes, I see him talking to somebody. They seem very glad to see each other. And who is that, that has just thrown his arm round him, as if he meant to appropriate him to himself? Do you know him?"

"The first is Mr. Selden. He was preaching at Mt. Carmel at the time we came home. The other I do not remember ever to have seen."

"Ah! they are looking for you. And now they are all leaving the house together, or perhaps coming up here. I hope they are, for I declare, Sophy, I like the looks of your brethren very much." And she laughed as she added: "You must not tell mother; she would think I was encouraging Harry in his foolishness, as she calls it. But here he comes, radiant with pleasure."

With some difficulty he made his way to them, accompanied by his two friends, Mr. Selden and Mr. Temple. The ceremony of introduction over, they sat some time

in pleasant conversation, and then, as there was nothing of particular interest to listen to, the ladies accompanied them down, and took leave of them at the door.

They had proceeded a short time in silence, when Mrs. Rodney turned to her companion with a look of queer perplexity. "Do tell me," she said, "are any of these gentlemanly persons what you call circuit riders?"

"Of course they are; all of them in their turn. Why?"

"Oh, because I had such a different idea of them."

"I have some curiosity to hear what your idea was. Will you tell me?"

"I hardly know myself. I knew they were good men, but not"——

"Not what?" said Mrs. Bradford, smiling, but determined to give her no assistance.

"Well, I thought they were very ignorant."

Again she stopped, blushing, and embarrassed, for she was not sure that her cousin would like to hear such opinions. But a glance at the amused expression of her face, reassured her.

"How do you know that they are not ignorant, Elizabeth?"

"Why, I am sure they do not seem so. They appear like gentlemen."

"But, my dear Elizabeth, perhaps some that you call gentlemen might yet be found ignorant of things that are important for others to know. The best education, I suppose, is that which fits a man for the position to which God calls him."

"Yes, no doubt; and I imagine in most cases these do not require much knowledge, as their congregations are not composed of very intelligent people. But the speci-

mens I have conversed with to-day are very different. They would suit any class of people."

"They are a pretty fair sample, I think, of the conference."

"Is it possible?" and the lady seemed for some moments lost in thought. Having disposed of her astonishment at the last observation, she resumed: "Harry, I know, has had every advantage for classical education; but do you think he ought to attempt to preach without a thorough course of theology?"

"One person, of course, can scarcely be expected to decide so momentous a question for another; but Harry's own conviction was, that when he was called to preach the Gospel, it was his duty to obey. He who called him knew the amount of preparation that was necessary. Some may, perhaps, be called to prepare themselves for the work. That must rest with their own consciences, and if it is so, then that is what they must attend to. But others may be called to go out at once into the highways and hedges, and, if possible, compel them to come in. Harry seems to have received his call in that way."

"But I thought he stayed another year in college after he determined to be a minister."

"He did. But he immediately put himself under the direction of his elders in the church, and they advised him to complete his course. But he was not idle. He commenced at once, by leading classes, attending to the establishment of Sabbath schools, and also exhorting and teaching in the country around Carlisle, wherever opportunity presented."

"Still I cannot but think it is a great mistake for him to lose the advantage of a theological training."

"There will be no necessity for him to lose it. In the first place, Harry has, I may safely say, been carefully studying theology for years. His mind and taste have always led in that direction. And, in the next place, as soon as he is received by the conference, he will have regular studies assigned him, and must be examined on them by persons appointed for that purpose."

"Indeed! I had no idea of that. I supposed they were not required to study at all."

"A great mistake, my dear cousin; and I doubt not many persons fall into the same error. At the same time, I am aware, that many of our young preachers fail to pay that attention to their studies that they would if they were shut up in the walls of a college. I have no fear of that in Harry's case. But, judging of the candidates for the ministry in your church, by their stock of theological knowledge, when they first present themselves, we should probably not see a great difference between them and our own novices."

CHAPTER IV.

ATTRACTION AND REPULSION.

"It shall be so!—I'll use each art,
Weave spells of wild bewildering charm,
Till every fibre of thy heart,
For me shall pulsate true and warm."

As the two ladies ran up the steps, a brilliant face glanced out of the window, and they were no sooner in the hall, than Rose Carter came springing to meet Mrs. Bradford, with clasping arms and musical shrieks of welcome. She drew her into the parlor, where they found Jessie, who though not in as wild spirits as her sister, was affectionately glad to see her. They talked of home and home friends till Mr. Rodney and Harry came in together.

Rose and Harry had not met for more than a year, in consequence partly of Mrs. Carter's having taken the alarm at Mrs. Rodney's too open manœuvres. She was by no means unwilling to sanction an attachment on the part of Harry for her beautiful daughter, provided he was the possessor of the noble estate in her own immediate neighborhood. That would be the consummation of the old family plan, and just what she would desire. But she was far less sanguine on that point than her friend. Neither was she certain that the attachment would be mutual. She felt a great dread of seeing her child deluded by such false expectations, and drooping under an unrequited affection, or else united to a Methodist

itinerant, without wealth herself, subjected to all the discomforts and mortifications of such a life. So she quietly but sagaciously managed to keep Rose out of the way as much as possible.

It had been well if she had also separated her from her affectionate but injudicious godmother, who was much more inclined to make love for Harry, than he was to attend to the business himself. There lay the danger, for that lady, absorbed in the reëstablishment of her family honors, and fearing that Harry would marry "some poor Methodist," as well as blinded by her devotion to Rose, saw none of the dangerous contingencies so visible to the more cautious mother. Self-deceived as we may charitably hope, she hesitated not to jest with Rose on the prospect of being some day mistress of Hunter's Lodge.

Rose, accustomed to reign a queen over all hearts that came within the sphere of her fascinations, lent a more willing ear to these sportive insinuations than one less flattered and admired might have done. The idea never intruded that anything more was necessary than to make a selection from the host of adorers that sighed around her. But then there was so racy a charm in the thought of slighting them all, and winning the one, who alone stood aloof in native dignity and freedom. She was by no means decided in her own mind that she should select him, but he must not be allowed to assert his independence, he must bow to the hitherto unresisted potency of her charms.

Under these circumstances, as might be expected, the meeting of these young persons, after so long a separation, was watched by Mrs. Rodney with no little solicitude. But the closest scrutiny failed to detect anything

in the manner of her nephew towards one sister differing from that bestowed upon the other. He met both with the warmth of frank and cordial friendship.

With Rose the case was different. Harry had so often been presented to her imagination in the light of a lover that she could not divest herself of a slight degree of embarrassment, observable only by those who saw her daily. To others it seemed merely the charm of girlish diffidence, softening while it heightened the effect of her singular beauty.

Harry sat down by Mrs. Munroe and they entered into a lively dialogue. Mrs. Rodney and Mrs. Bradford occasionally joined. Rose sat near, and Harry frequently appealed to her, endeavoring to draw her into the conversation, but without much success. She could not disguise from herself that the meeting had embarrassed and agitated her, while he remained calm and self-possessed, affectionately polite to both sisters alike. He was even bestowing more attention upon Jessie than upon herself. This disappointed her vanity. It was not the homage she was accustomed to receive from young gentlemen, and she gladly rose with her sister to take leave.

Rose went several times with Mrs. Bradford to conference, but always returned dissatisfied and out of humor. Harry was evidently more interested in the business of the meeting, than he was in the conversation of the ladies in the gallery. No polite or kind attention was wanting on his part, and he frequently brought his friends to be introduced, for many were attracted by her striking appearance. And yet nothing—neither her softest words, her most alluring smiles, nor her prettily acted displeasure could keep him by her side when anything of importance was before the conference.

Harry and his mother spent several days at the house of Mr. Munroe, where Rose had the satisfaction of showoff the devotion of her various admirers. But so far from awakening any feeling akin to jealousy, Harry looked on with a kind of compassionate surprise, to see so much of coquetry on her part, and of unmanly obsequiousness on theirs. So, after all, she could make nothing of him but a calm dignified spectator. Over and over again, she resolved to care nothing about him. He was so provoking—he was a perfect iceberg. But when the family party were again alone, and subjects of interest were in discussion, he was the same Harry that her mother used to call "Sunshine," in the days of their childhood, and again she felt her heart glow under the cheerful light of his smile and the joyous tones of his voice.

Poor Rose! she was never so nearly vanquished. Here was one of the most elegant young men she had ever seen, constantly with her, in the unrestrained freedom of social intercourse, and he did not seem to know that she was the most beautiful girl in Baltimore. He responded to her most eloquent glances with far less tenderness than he bestowed upon those of his mother. She dropped her glove, and he nearly stepped upon it in his haste to place a chair for Mrs. Rodney. Such insensibility was not to be endured in one so young and handsome himself. Those eyes, which she had described as "deep, bright, and most expressive blue," must learn to kindle at her approach. That smile of singular brilliancy and sweetness must be under the control of her changing mood. But how was this to be accomplished? He would leave Baltimore in a few days to spend the next year—she knew not where. What was to be done? Oh, a bright thought! She had decided to return to Gaywood

in a few weeks. She would anticipate that event, for the sake of placing herself under his escort. To be sure, she had made several engagements that must be broken by such a change in her plans; and poor The. Eldridge would be in a paroxysm of sentimental distress; but that was a trifle. She was secure of his homage, and it would be so amusing to see his pensive airs, and hear his pathetic "Ah! Miss Carter—ah, you cannot be so cruel!" But a few smiles would make it all up. Poor fellow! it was so convenient to have him about her—he was so devoted. She was sorry to disappoint him, but what could she do? This polite indifference of Harry was not to be tolerated.

So Rose announced her intention of accompanying Mrs. Bradford and her son on their return home. Jessie was so accustomed to yield to her pretty caprices, when there was nothing really imprudent in them, that she made no serious opposition, and Mrs. Rodney was as well pleased with the plan as if it had been one of her own devising.

CHAPTER V.

THE APPOINTMENTS READ.

"But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God."—Acts xx. 24.

One evening, as Mrs. Bradford and Harry were coming out of a meeting at Light street, where they had heard a clear, strong, common-sense discourse, not unadorned by natural eloquence, they encountered Hunter Rodney not far from the door.

"Why, Hunter," exclaimed Harry in surprise, "how came you here in this crowd of brethren? I thought you were going to the party."

"Why, the truth is, Harry, I am sick of these stupid parties, and I like the brethren so much, that, as Elizabeth would not go to night, and I heard you were here, I followed. There was no such thing as getting near you, though I tried. I did at last find a seat, but it was no easy matter."

"I wish I had known you were there, I would have made room for you. We did not have one of our great preachers, but I hope you are not sorry you went."

"Not at all; I assure you I liked the sermon very much. It was not, to be sure, one of the fine, polished city sermons, that we are in the habit of hearing, but there was a freshness, an originality about it that pleased me exceedingly. Do you know who he is?"

"Yes; he is one of our regular old pioneers. A graduate of Bush College, where Brother Preston sent me last winter."

"Bush College? I do not understand you."

"No, I suppose not," said Harry, laughing; "that is what we call our districts and circuits out in the backwoods."

"But this man must have had an education."

"Of course he had. Just such an education as has made him one of our most effective men, and soundest preachers; though I doubt whether he ever went to school more than three or four winters in his life."

"Then do explain to me how he ever became what he now is."

"I will try, for I happen to have heard something of his early history. He was the son of a blacksmith, out in the western part of the State, and had commenced working with his father, when at some quarterly meeting or camp-meeting, he was converted, and became a Methodist. Of course he immediately joined a class. There he was called upon from week to week to relate his experience, and if there is any natural talent for speaking it soon shows itself in that way. After a while he began to lead in prayer, then to exhort. In this way he went on. The Bible and Methodist hymn-book were almost his entire library. He read the one, and sang the other, till he was perfectly saturated with both, not only their spirit, but their style. This trained his power of thought and exalted his imagination. He had naturally strong sense, and now that he had become a Christian, his heart was full of zeal for his Master, and love for the souls of men. Then came his call to the ministry."

"He surely then repaired the defects of his early education. Or did he at once drop the sledge-hammer and rush from the anvil to the pulpit?"

"My dear cousin, what else was he to do? He was too poor to go from home. He had already learned as much as his teacher himself knew. He could only educate himself by studying sermon making. This improved and strengthened his intellect, while his constant feasting on the Bible and Charles Wesley's hymns kept his heart warm and tender. Then Methodist preachers have one great source of improvement not generally appreciated. We hear a great deal about the advantage of foreign tours, but I assure you the travel of a Methodist preacher, peculiar and limited though it be, is for his purpose in life the most beneficial that he could have. New scenes, new characters and circumstances, keep him wide awake, and in my opinion no class of men are keener observers of human nature and passing events than they are. Their freedom from pecuniary dependence on their people is not without its influence. But to return to our friend. As he grew older, he was naturally brought more in contact with other minds, as also with other books, and was well prepared to make every improvement of his opportunities."

"So that is what you call a Bush College education, is it? I rather think I like it, and wish I had a touch of it myself. But, Harry, I have heard several of your young circuit riders, who cannot yet have passed through such a training. They preach sensibly and eloquently. How is that?"

"I can tell you, but you are not to take those you hear at conference as a sample. Some of us are green

enough. But you shall hear how we manage. We cannot but learn some readiness in speaking at class-meetings, love-feasts, etc., then when sent on a circuit we begin by preaching on some text that interests us, and that we wish to study, among the part of our people that are least intelligent. In trying to make it plain and comprehensible to our unlettered hearers the very marrow and sweetness of it gets into our own hearts. New light breaks in from parallel passages, new ideas arise, and as we pass on preaching the same sermon to a more enlightened community it still improves. And so on from place to place, till the first bald outline becomes, in some cases, quite a fine, well-digested discourse, fit even for the critical ears of a Baltimore audience."

"You say '*we*,' Harry. Now do tell me frankly if you have ever resorted to that method."

"To be sure I have, and found it the very best way of studying. It fixes the whole subject in my memory, where it is laid up, to be still further improved as my mind matures and strengthens."

"Well, 'live and learn' is the old saying, and I am sorry to find we are so near home, otherwise I might pick up a few more valuable items."

The last day of the conference had come, and Mrs. Bradford repaired at an early hour to the gallery of Wesley Chapel. Mrs. Hunter Rodney could not think of being absent when the appointments of the preachers were read out, as her vivacious mind had caught the idea that it was a time of deep interest. The mother, trembling between hope and fear for her son's fate, would willingly have been left to her own deep anxieties, without the interruption of the thoughtless rattle of her cousin.

But not by word or look would she have deprived any one of an expected pleasure; so, with her usual calm and kind demeanor, she tried to hear patiently the many unanswerable questions of her companion as to her wishes, opinions, and expectations in regard to Harry's future place of labor.

Some items of business were still before the conference, but in a short time the large assembly became hushed in expectation, as the venerable bishop rose and stood before them. In his hand he held the paper, the reading of which would decide the comfort or discomfort of so many families for the next twelvemonth.

All eyes were fastened upon that benign face, as again and again his lips moved, but without audible sound. He paused for one moment, with closed eyes, and brow slightly elevated. The strength so meekly, but silently asked, was given, and he spoke. His voice at first was low and unsteady, but gathered force as he went on. He spoke of the difficulties that must of necessity be encountered in assigning suitable homes to persons so different in their real requirements, and in adapting the varied talent and Christian graces of such a number of laborers to their work. He knew that in some instances this had been imperfectly accomplished. Still, under the circumstances, it was the best that could be done; and, although his heart was deeply pained by the knowledge of the privations—the actual sufferings—that some of his brethren must endure, yet he rejoiced to believe that a true missionary spirit prevailed among them; that they were willing to go forth in the name of their divine Master, sustained and cheered by his promise: "Lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." There was one appointment that he felt great reluctance

to announce. It was one that required more than ordinary grace, and even worldly sagacity, to fill, and had given him and his council more pain and labor to decide than all others together. After much prayer and deliberation, they had found it necessary to send a highly valued brother, in feeble health, and with a large family, to a place where the labor would not only be great, but the necessary expenses far beyond the usual allowance for the year. He knew that brother's heart, and felt sure there would be no murmuring, no shirking there. He also thought he knew the hearts of all the brethren present well enough to feel equally sure that they would not allow one of their number to suffer for the comforts, almost the necessaries of life, while it was in their power to prevent it; especially as none—not even the brother upon whom the trial must fall—knew whose name stood in connection with so undesirable an appointment.

He paused, and looking round on the earnest faces of his hearers, continued:

"Brethren, we are all one family, engaged in one great work. What shall we do for our beloved brother?"

It was enough. Whispers began to pass from one to another, and presently an aged man arose, and exchanged a few words with the bishop. Hats were passed round, and in a few moments a sum was collected amply sufficient to meet the wants of the still unknown brother. And that not from the purses of the rich, but from the pittance of poor itinerants, most of them circuit riders, whose nominal salary is but one hundred dollars per annum, and that seldom all paid.*

When it was finished, the bishop again rose with the list of appointments in his hand. To say there was no

* This whole incident is fact.

anxiety in those upturned faces, would be to deny them some of the best feelings common to humanity, for many had those dependent upon them, ill fitted to contend with itinerant life even in its most softened aspects. Still the more general expression was that of calm and dignified self-surrender. Probably most of them had fully counted the cost before they put their hand to the plough. Others who had entered the field under the stimulus of ardent youthful zeal, had found it a good discipline, and early drank into the same spirit.

The agitation, the flutter, as well as the deep solicitude, were more apparent among the wives and daughters in the gallery than below. Mrs. Bradford was troubled to find how much of hope she had cherished, that Harry would be sent to some circuit near home, for now her fears began to predominate. She listened with breathless attention, and resolutely steadied nerves, for his name. It came at last: "Long Run circuit—James Temple and Harry Bradford." The suspense was over, and with it the forced strength. Faint and trembling, her head sunk upon the front of the gallery.

Mrs. Rodney, whose attention had wearied of so many names of places and persons that had no interest for her, was roused by the sound of the only one she cared to hear, only too late to catch the mention of the place to which he was assigned. She turned with her usual animation to ask her cousin. This was perhaps the best thing that could have happened, as it checked the tide of emotion that had nearly conquered the firmness of this devoted mother.

She raised her head, and with a faint smile gave the desired information. This brought a flood of questions again, that required all her ingenuity to answer or parry,

and served to keep her occupied till the crowd slowly moved out of the house and they reached home.

Harry soon followed. He knew where he should find his mother, and went immediately to her chamber. She met him with a smile, but could not speak. He put his arms round her and gently drew her head to his breast, as he said:

"My precious mother, I know you are satisfied."

"Yes, dearest. I have given you to the Lord, and have no desire to withdraw the gift." But with the words came a burst of tears, which Harry, in the enthusiasm of the moment, was at a loss to understand.

"Oh, mother, what is it? What distresses you?"

"Nothing, my dear Harry, but what I am heartily ashamed of. I say I have given you to the Lord, and I sincerely believe I have. But still I cannot conquer the selfish feeling that makes me suffer in the separation."

"I hope that is not wrong, dear mother. If it is, I am involved in the same condemnation, for though my path of duty is plain, and generally very pleasant, there are times when my very heart sickens for want of your loving presence. But we must not yield to such feelings—must we?"

"No, my dear boy, and I thank you for reminding me of it. After all, though, I fear the storms of next winter will make me sad, thinking of my poor child. And yet you will be among kind friends, and above all, have the same Almighty Protector who watched over you last winter, and brought you safe into a warm and comfortable shelter."

"Oh, yes. And then, you know, I have promised to be more cautious about camping out all night in a snow

drift." Harry's smile had its usual effect, for she smiled in return.

"Now, dear, I will remove the traces of these rebellious tears, and smooth the disordered locks, for we ought not to absent ourselves any longer from our kind friends."

They entered the parlor just as Hunter Rodney came in at another door, as usual in the mood for teasing. So taking a chair on one side of his mother while Harry occupied the other, he began:

"Harry, I hope you are not pleased with your appointment."

"Ah," returned Harry, laughingly, "why so?"

"Only because I think I should like to take your place."

"Oh, Hunter," interposed his mother, "do be serious."

"Serious! my dear mother; I think if you had been at Wesley Chapel this morning, you would not suspect me of being anything else." And with a queer attempt at drollery, which was soon lost in real feeling, he began to describe the scene in the conference room.

"Such a set of noble fellows, I never saw. There they sat, with their calm, steadfast faces, not knowing whether they, with their families, were to spend the next year or two in the comforts of city life, or in beating about among the mountain storms, as my friend Harry did last winter, or in some poor barren region, where they can scarcely get bread for their children, or worse still, if anything can be worse, where they may all die of bilious fever. I watched them closely. In one or two instances I thought I detected a slight paling of the color, or a quiver of the muscles about the firm mouth of some

near me. But if I did, it was instantly lost in a cheerful smile of acquiescence. Not a sad or discontented face among them. I declare it was a scene of more true moral sublimity than I ever witnessed in my life. I know I was more excited and agitated than any of those who were concerned in it. I felt like taking the saddle-bags, and adopting the life of a humble circuit rider, as the most glorious in the history of man."

Mr. Rodney had involuntarily risen to his feet, his feelings warming with his subject, and as he concluded he crossed over to Harry, and grasped his hand with the utmost cordiality, as in congratulation of the choice he had made in his path of life.

His mother was interested in spite of herself, though she tried to laugh at his flight, as she expressed it, and hastened to turn the current of the conversation.

CHAPTER VI.

LOVE'S YOUNG DREAM.

"All I prized but yesterday
In the distance lessening lay,
Like some golden cloud afar,
Fallen and faded as a star"

ALICE CAREY.

THE time had now come to leave Baltimore and return home. The party was the same which came together, with the addition of Rose. How that young lady managed to pacify her "poor The. Eldridge," for her broken engagement does not appear, but neither the loss of his devoted attentions, nor his despair at the withdrawal of his "bright particular star," seemed to have made much impression upon the gay spirits with which she commenced her journey, for her "plans were formed and her hopes were high" of achieving a triumph over one that she could not but acknowledge, was as the fine gold compared to mere tinsel. But, poor girl! she was again destined to disappointment. She had altogether mistaken the road to that noble heart, which she was as incapable of appreciating, as she was of winning by her beauty and coquettish wiles.

During the journey, she found herself not only in the minority, but surrounded by an atmosphere that damped her spirits, and constrained her to take refuge in silence. The subjects discussed by her friends were of a

nature and in a language she had never learned. Harry joined modestly in the conversation, but with an animation and evident enjoyment that amazed her. She was vexed with herself for running away from scenes where her lightest word and glance were deferred to as the very oracles of wisdom and beauty.

Harry's stay at home was too short to afford her an opportunity for a change of measures, so she saw him depart with ill-concealed mortification, free as ever, seeming only anxious to cheer the drooping spirits of the loved ones at Hunter's Lodge, and to enter with renewed ardor of soul into the vineyard of his Lord.

It is needless to say that Harry was received with acclamations of delight by his Long Run friends. Neither is it necessary to enter again into a minute detail of those scenes of deep and holy interest that must ever largely contribute to make up the life of a faithful minister of the cross of whatever name. Our young friend was on the fleeting wave of time, and hastening on to those events which are, however lightly considered by many, most weighty in their influence for good or evil.

He still found a home with the good Mrs. Danby and indeed almost anywhere on the circuit, but the fireside of his loved and respected colleague was more than any other, his refuge in all times of unusual joy, sorrow, perplexity or home-sickness. There they together vigorously pursued their studies, for it must be confessed that Mr. Temple, though nominally the teacher, was as often the taught, as his pupil.

The only change of any mark was the substitution of Mr. Foster and his family for the Lannings. The good old elder Harry missed, but the other members of the

family could be dispensed with. Their loss was more than made up by their successors.

The summer passed away delightfully among the mountain breezes. Near its close, according to a promise secured by Mr. Preston, as well for the gratification of others as himself, Harry attended the camp-meeting in the neighborhood of his home, which allowed a short visit, both before and after, to that endeared spot. He had the company of his mother and Willie all the time. Then he returned to feast upon the glories of autumn among the fair scenes of his wild circuit, and although Winter brought more than his usual amount of biting frosts and fierce tempests, he had gained some experience and was careful not to expose himself in night rides more than duty required.

Letters from home constantly awaited him at Brookton and one or two other places as he passed round, and generally brought cheering news. About mid-winter, however, his grandfather had a second attack of partial paralysis, from which he was longer in recovering than in the former instance. Willie had fatigued himself in attending upon his father, and was still suffering from a cold taken at that time. All this had for a while a depressing effect on Harry's spirits; but the next package revived him by accounts of his grandfather's improvement, and their hopes of his being restored to his usual health.

A few weeks later, Harry found among the letters awaiting him at Brookton, one from his mother, giving an account of the death of Mrs. Allington. He had known for some time past that her health was failing; but as she had tried to keep up her spirits for the sake of her children, it had been less apparent to the others

than to Susan, who had fewer objects to engross her attention.

Not more than a week before her death, Mrs. Allington wrote to Mrs. Bradford expressing her conviction that her time on earth must be short. That she was willing to depart, and be with her Saviour, especially as she had great comfort in the belief that her beloved Susan would be provided for in a way to secure her happiness as far as it could be in a world of uncertainties. That she esteemed Mr. Selden one of the most truly excellent young men that she had ever known, with various other expressions to the same effect. The very next day after the dispatch of this communication, she became worse, and was never again able to leave her bed.

Mrs. Rodney, in her joy that Harry was out of danger from that quarter, failed not in her letters to speak of the engagement, and to rejoice that Susan had found a man so exactly suitable to her.

"Only think, Harry," she wrote, "what an excellent match it will be. She is just the person for a Methodist preacher's wife. She could not be expected to shine in society, and will do so much good in that position. I am sure you must feel glad to hear of it, for you seemed to take a brother's interest in her, especially when she lost her father."

Harry threw these letters on the table and sat leaning back in his large chair, in deep thought. He had loved Mrs. Allington, and the knowledge that he should never see her again in life was painful. But she had passed peacefully out of a world of care and vicissitude to one of perfect joy and rest. Why should he feel so depressed?

Before he could answer this question to his own satisfaction, Mrs. Danby sent to call him to supper. The kind old lady saw that something had disturbed him, and remarked that she hoped he had received no unpleasant news. He was surprised to find himself quite annoyed by the question; but quickly conquering the unworthy feeling, he told her of the death of his friend, which accounted for his unusual gravity and speedy retreat from the table.

But he was not so easily satisfied himself. There was something more than Mrs. Allington's death that pressed upon his spirit. What was it? The truth stared him in the face. It was the news of Susan's engagement.

How strange! He had no thought of being in love with Susan. Again he took up the letters with a momentary idea that he had possibly misunderstood the expressions, but put them back upon the table, for he knew there was no mistake. He walked back and forward through the room, trying to read his own heart, where he began to fear the mistake lay. Had he really loved the gentle companion of his boyhood without knowing it? He was unwilling to believe it, and it was a long time before all his self-catechising could unfold the truth to his view. His memory went back to the times when she was the Lily of his dreams, the chosen companion of all his walks and sports. Could it be? He knew he had always regarded her as far superior to any other young lady of his acquaintance, and although he had put far off the idea of marriage, except when the subject was urged upon him by others, he could no longer disguise from himself his painful surprise that she had preferred, and been gained by another. Then he blamed himself for the pain he felt, and resolved with

great zeal that, as the case was hopeless, he would overcome it without delay.

It must be confessed that it was not by a single effort that the victory was achieved. His ministerial work, hitherto so delightful, had lost much of its attraction. Life in the future was less bright. An indescribable listlessness was creeping over him. This startled him, and he began to arouse from his dreams of what might have been. Still, it was only by much prayer and watchfulness that he learned to think, without uncomfortable regrets, of Susan as the betrothed of another.

He made it the occasion of a renewed consecration of himself, with all his ransomed powers, to the great work upon which he had entered, and resolutely forbore to mention the name of Susan in his letters to his mother. Susan wrote frequently to Mrs. Bradford; but for a long time, the loss of her beloved mother, and kindred subjects, seemed to engross her pen. As she did not allude to her engagement, and probably was not aware of her mother's communication, Mrs. Bradford did not touch upon the subject.

So the affair rested, and by the time for the next meeting of conference, Harry was prepared to meet his Brother Selden, and congratulate him on his approaching happiness without a jealous regret. To his utter surprise, Mr. Selden positively denied that there was any prospect of such an event, and insisted upon Harry's telling him what he had heard on the subject. Harry then stated as nearly as he could remember, the words of Mrs. Allington's letter.

"Oh, now I understand how the mistake originated," replied Mr. Selden. "The person referred to by Mrs. Allington, was Marcus Selden, a cousin of mine. He

owns a fine farm in the neighborhood of Staunton, and I know was much attached to Susan. I am glad to hear of his success. He is a fine fellow. I wondered that I did not hear from him; but I see now that he is more pleasantly engaged."

"This is all very strange to me, for I used to think you were pleased with Susan yourself."

"And I will not deny to you, Harry, that I was. For a short time after they went to Mr. Herbert's, I was with them a great deal, and, as an old friend, was treated by all with so much kindness, that for a while hope cheered me on."

"Were you rejected?"

"No; she had consideration enough for my feelings to spare me that pain."

"I might have known it, for she is everything that a true woman should be."

"She is indeed. I was aware at the very time when the suspicion of my attachment first broke upon her mind, and from that instant hope began to die. I saw that it distressed her. She changed color repeatedly, and for a moment or two, did not raise her eyes, while the expression of sadness and discomfort was unmistakable. In no other way did she notice it, and yet I felt as plainly as if she had spoken it, that henceforth we could be friends and nothing more. She did not seem to vary from her usual sweetness of manner, but there was that indescribable something, like an atmosphere that always surrounds a pure and true woman, that mysterious circle, unseen, but felt as soon as approached, that says: 'Thus far and no farther.' She will be an inestimable treasure to Marcus."

"My dear friend, I have given you pain by reviving these recollections."

"No, Harry," he answered with a smile. "It is all over now. For a while, I must confess, I felt it deeply; but a Christian minister has work to do that requires all his strength of mind and body, and I am happy to say that I was assisted to overcome my regrets, and even become quite interested in poor Marcus' fate, before I left. It was not then decided."

"Do you know him well? Is he worthy of her?"

"I think he is, and that is as high praise as I should venture to bestow on any man." After a pause he resumed, "Harry, did you ever notice her peculiar change of color?"

"Yes, often. I always thought it one of her greatest charms. It is more beautiful than beauty."

"Do you not think her beautiful?"

"To me she is; but I have so constantly seen her with Rose Carter, and heard the universal exclamations at her appearance, that I began to distrust my own judgment on the subject."

"In mere physical beauty, Miss Carter, I own, excels any woman I ever saw; but at the same time, I agree with you. Susan Allington is more to my taste."

CHAPTER VII.

PROPOSAL AND REJECTION.

"She sung of Love, while o'er her lyre
The rosy rays of evening fell,
As if to feed with their soft fire,
The soul within that trembling shell.
The same rich light hung o'er her cheek,
And played around those lips that sung
And spoke, as flowers would sing and speak,
If Love could lend their leaves a tongue."

MOORE.

HARRY'S visit to Hunter's Lodge had been saddened by seeing the manifest change in his grandfather since his last attack. Willie's cough too, seemed to cling to him. Glen Cottage was now shut up nearly all the time, as Mrs. Rodney considered her presence more necessary in town. Mr. Stuart had the oversight of it, though he continued to make his home at the Lodge.

Again the hopes of Harry's friends were deferred, for he was sent to a circuit adjoining Baltimore. The very one, in fact, in which Aspen Grove, the residence of the Austens, was situated. Mr. Austen had been compelled to go south, in company with Mr. Richard Allington, to attend to some business connected with the estate of Mr. Allington, senior, which might not be adjusted before the Fall. Mary had embraced the opportunity to spend the summer with her sisters in Staunton. In the meantime,

as Mr. Munroe's house in town was undergoing some alterations and additions, he had engaged the occupation of Aspen Grove for the summer.

Harry had been warmly urged to make his principal home with Mr. and Mrs. Munroe at Aspen Grove, but although he felt their kindness, and loved them as old and tried friends, yet he knew their mode of life and the society they would draw around them, would be no more congenial to his taste than conducive to his mental and spiritual improvement. So he secured a home in a secluded farmhouse, where he could pursue his studies unmolested by the pleasure seekers who might constantly be found in the drawing-room of Mrs. Munroe, especially when Rose was her inmate. He often visited them, and was always sure of an affectionate welcome.

Rose was at Gaywood, and not expected to visit her sister before her return from Saratoga, whither she was to go with her brother George and Virginia. The beaux were constant in their inquiries respecting her movements, and among them Harry often saw Mr. Theodore Eldridge, Rose's "*poor The.*" This young gentleman was, like Harry, the son of a widowed mother. That was the only point of resemblance. His father had died recently, leaving but a moderate property for himself and two sisters, much younger. He considered himself a student of law, and probably persuaded his mother to believe the same fiction. True, he lounged about the office of one of the first lawyers in the city, reclined on the sofa when overpowered by his "constitutional fatigue"—occasionally turned over the books, and would, no doubt, in due time, by reason of family influence, wealthy friends, etc., be admitted to the bar, as many another of the same stamp has been before him. He kept

the run of the light literature of the day, especially the poetry; dressed in the extreme of fashion, and spent money with the most graceful carelessness. He professed to live only in the sunshine of his adored Miss Carter's presence, and although she laughed at his avowed passion, he had too much vanity to despair, and she found his devotion too useful, as well as flattering, to be renounced. He was thus, at present, the most prominent among her admirers, and no sooner learned that she had gone to Saratoga, than he declared remaining in the hot, dusty city a day longer would be absolute suicide, and followed her.

Harry, meanwhile, was treading with steady steps a far different path. Diligently preparing by study and prayer to feed the souls committed to his charge—instructing the ignorant—comforting the afflicted—and pointing the dying to the ever-open Fountain, where all may wash and be clean. If he thought of Rose, it was with the yearning compassion of one who sees a beloved sister thoughtlessly dancing on the edge of a precipice, and earnestly did he plead that she might awake to her danger before it was too late.

George, who had become an enthusiastic farmer, and Virginia, who had left her little ones at home, could not be persuaded to stay at the Springs as long as Rose desired, so, as they had promised Jessie a few days, they hurried back in the height of the season. Rose rebelled openly at such barbarism, but there was no help for it, and she knew Harry was near Aspen Grove. She did not absolutely confess even to herself how far it biased her feelings, yet she did not forget that both Col. Hunter and Willie were apparently failing. Visions of Hunter's Lodge, and gay winters in Baltimore, flitted before

her fancy, herself the cynosure of all eyes—the beautiful and envied bride of the only man for whom a feeling approaching to tenderness had ever lingered in her bosom.

One morning, about midsummer, Harry had gone into the city, as he often did when in that part of his circuit. At Mrs. Rodney's, he learned that George Carter, with Virginia and Rose, had passed through the day before, and had gone out to make the promised visit to Jessie. It had been his original plan to call on his way back, so he soon found himself at Aspen Grove. Giving his horse to a servant, he crossed the lawn and paused before a window, for he heard the voice of Rose accompanying the guitar, and would not interrupt the music by his entrance.

Virginia and Jessie stood near another window at the further part of the room, examining some fine exotics in full bloom. But the group near his own position attracted more of his regard. Rose was singing some wild, heart-broken lay of love, while a tall, fine-looking man sat near her, in an attitude of rapt attention.

Harry could only see the face of Rose in profile, but the classic outline and rich coloring, the dark glossy curls that fell upon her snowy neck, the beautifully rounded arm and taper fingers, as they lightly touched the strings, impressed him with a clearer sense of her rare beauty than ever before. But he sighed when he thought, how those very charms were but a snare to lure her unwary feet from the paths of safety and happiness.

As the last note died away, another and more audible sigh proceeded from the breast of the listener within, expressive of very different emotions. He was about to speak, but as Harry moved towards the window, his figure caught the eye of Rose, and, tossing the guitar

into the hands of her companion, she sprung towards him, exclaiming: "Ah, Harry!" with an expression of such genuine pleasure as surprised him, and caused an answering glow in his own expressive face. Then suddenly seeming to recollect the presence of a spectator, she blushed and laughed with a most becoming embarrassment. Instantly recovering her usual manner, however, she turned and reëntered the room, followed by Harry, whom she introduced to Mr. Conway.

That gentleman had risen upon receiving the guitar so unceremoniously, and stood regarding the new-comer with a keenness of scrutiny not altogether pacific. But the other ladies now came forward, when, seeing the affectionate kiss given and received by Harry and Virginia, his expression softened, and he recovered his equanimity so far as to take part in the conversation with some spirit. Still his dark eyes flashed uneasily whenever Rose gave more of her attention to Harry than she did to himself. Harry soon discovered that Mr. Conway was one of the many who bowed in the train of Rose at Saratoga. Unlike others, he had found no virtue in the waters when she turned from them, and had overtaken the party at Philadelphia.

After tea, the cool breeze and faint rays of the young moon drew them out into the grounds. Mrs. Munroe excused herself, and went to pay her evening visit to her nursery. Mr. Conway had the satisfaction of seeing Harry attach himself to the side of his young aunt, and stroll off to a distant seat, where the following conversation occurred:

"Jinnie, who is this Mr. Conway? He talks like a man of sense?"

"Oh, he is one of Rose's latest-made captives. We

found him at Saratoga—a rich planter from Louisiana. Why, you remember hearing of Mrs. McArthur, who was so much talked about last winter?—not in a very complimentary way, to be sure—this is her brother. He is very intelligent, and very agreeable, too, or was, before he became so much in love, bidding fair to take a prominent position in his native State."

"How does Rose regard him?"

This question was met by a meaning glance, and the laughing reply:

"Does it concern you very deeply to know?"

"Yes, it does," was the grave response.

Virginia clapped her hands in high exultation, but was soon checked in her premature joy by Harry's next remark.

"Everything touching Rose's welfare interests me, as it always has. But, oh! Jinnie, you have been listening to the wild speculations of Aunt Rodney. Do not let her put such absurd ideas into your head."

"Why absurd, Harry?"

"I am sure your own good sense will answer that question, if you reflect a moment. Look at Rose, and conceive of her as the wife of a travelling preacher."

"No, indeed. I shall look at her in no such light."

"But in no other can she be placed, if she were to unite her fate with mine."

"Harry, I declare you put me out of patience. Do you not see that my dear father is slowly but surely passing away. He is sadly changed since his second attack of paralysis. What can we expect from another. And Willie, dear lovely Willie! If he should even be spared to us a few years, he is totally unfit to manage such an estate as Hunter's Lodge. You must necessarily settle there, as the reversionary owner."

"Oh, Jinnie, Jinnie, say no more on this subject. If you could imagine the pain it gives me when I am forced to contemplate the melancholy alternative, you would be one of the last to inflict it. But of one thing be assured, my wife must be a Christian."

"Of course, dear Harry; and whoever she is, you could soon make her all you wish."

"No, dear auntie, I want to marry no Christian of my own making."

"But you know what I mean, you perverse boy," accompanying the words with an affectionate gesture. "Your influence—your instructions would so mould the character of any woman that really loved you, that she"——

"Aunt Virginia, you talk as if I was a man of thirty at least. But I cannot listen to this subject any longer. You have not told me how Rose receives the attentions of Mr. Conway."

"I do not see why you should wish to know, as you are so indifferent yourself."

"For the best of reasons. I am far from indifferent to anything that concerns her real happiness."

"Then, I believe, I will punish you for being so provoking, by leaving you to make your own observations. Come, I am going in."

Harry lingered a little to calm the agitation always consequent upon these discussions, and then followed. Rose was again singing to her entranced auditor, and Jessie talking over the frolics of their girlhood with Virginia. He listened and laughed with them awhile and then took leave.

George and Virginia left the next day, but Mr. Conway still remained at Aspen Grove, considering himself

happy in having possession of the ground, for the city was almost depopulated, so far as the fashionable world was concerned. Even Mr. Eldridge most reluctantly found himself detained at the Springs in attendance upon his mother, who was not willing to leave so early.

After a few days of almost delirious happiness, Mr. Conway, with the entire approval of Mr. and Mrs. Munroe, made a passionate avowal of his love to Rose, and, to his utter consternation, was refused. Whether he was justified in his sanguine expectation of a different result, or whether Rose really believed he would take the first "no" for an answer, is uncertain. But at any rate she had not been taught the important lesson, that a true, right-minded woman can and ought to spare the mortification of a refusal to any man of common discernment. However the case might be, the proud spirit of Mr. Conway struggled so successfully with his deeply wounded affections, that without seeking to reverse the decision, he almost immediatly left Aspen Grove.

CHAPTER VIII.

DEATH-BED WARNINGS.

"Smitten friends
Are angels sent on errands full of love;
For us they languish, and for us they die."

YOUNG.

THE calm that followed this excitement, was becoming so distasteful to Rose, that she began to look forward to the time of Harry's next visit with restless impatience, imagining all the time that she was excessively displeased with him, though why, she would have been at a loss to tell if she had been asked.

The secret of it was, that he still retained his freedom. His joys and sorrows were not all at her disposal. He could breathe in an atmosphere not illumined by her smiles. She almost wished he would not come there any more, talking about the affairs of Europe with Mr. Munroe, and about books with Jessie, and even playing with the children, as if she were a mere cypher. He was the strangest specimen of a young man that she ever saw. She wondered what he would think when he heard she had refused Mr. Conway.

In this soliloquizing mood, she took her embroidery and seated herself at a window commanding the approach to the house. Why did she select this window? Why did her eyes so often stray from her pattern to glance through the trees? Why did she start and blush as she caught a distant view of a horseman? Why did she fly

to her toilet to put in order the ringlets scattered by the summer breeze? Why, when she sat in the drawing-room beside him who would not wear her chains, did she veil those magnificent eyes with their drooping fringes, and speak in tones so soft and gentle? Let those who can read the inmost foldings of the female heart, answer these questions.

"Harry, you must be fatigued or sick. You do not look like yourself. What is the matter?

"I am not sick, Rose, nor much fatigued, but I come now upon a sad and serious errand. Julia Raymond is very ill, and wishes you to come and see her. Can you be ready to go with me in an hour or two?"

"Oh, yes, I can be ready," said Rose, starting up, and changing color. "But, oh, Harry, do you think she will die. Have you seen her?"

"I have just come from there. But do not be agitated. Sit down and I will tell you about it."

Rose wept, but suffered him to lead her back to her seat.

"I thought you must have known of this, for she was taken sick nearly a week ago, and you used to be so intimate."

Rose blushed, for she felt abashed under the mildly reproving eye of her friend. The truth was that the ardor of her friendship for Miss Raymond had died away since she had left the flowery paths of fashion and folly to walk in that of the Christian, and their almost daily visits had dwindled down to a formal and constrained call at long intervals. This was not with the concurrence of Miss Raymond, but Rose shunned the serious conversations and remonstrances of her friend.

She answered Harry's last remark by saying hastily,

"I intended to ride over and see her last week. But do tell me all you know about it."

"There is little to tell, Rose. She took a long walk, to see a woman who had been seriously injured by a fall. The day was very warm, and the walk fatiguing. Her mother thinks she became suddenly chilled on her return, complained of headache and lay down, but waked only in the delirium of fever. She is now perfectly conscious, and in great peace of mind, but the physician thinks, rapidly sinking."

Rose shrunk from the solemn interview to which she was summoned, but could think of no excuse for avoiding it, and while Harry soothed her vague, almost superstitious fears, she felt, without knowing it, the support of his manly mind, and, somewhat calmed, they went together to find Jessie and tell her the sad condition of their young friend.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Monroe were shocked and grieved to hear of Miss Raymond's danger, and before Harry had time to ask it, Mr. Monroe had given directions to have the buggy brought to the door. As the distance was several miles, there was no time to lose, and they were soon on the way.

Rose still wept in silence, and Harry began to pass censure upon himself for having judged her too harshly. She certainly manifested more sensibility than he had ever given her credit for, though in reality, most of those tears were due to her unconquerable reluctance to enter the chamber of death. Of this Harry had no conception. Rose, subdued and weeping on account of the danger of her friend, or perhaps in tender regret at the remembrance of her late coldness and estrangement, was a different being in his eyes, from Rose, the glittering

capricious idol of the saloon, and unconsciously to himself, there was a tenderness in his manner that sunk deeper into the heart of the wondering girl than all the high flown compliments to which her ear was accustomed.

He tried to draw her into conversation, that he might impress on her softened heart the solemn realities of life and death, but without success. As they drew near the house, she turned to him, and earnestly begged him not to go away while she remained, but to take her back with him. And she clung to his arm when they entered the house, as to the only refuge from her undefined terrors.

Miss Raymond was sleeping, which gave time to Rose to regain, in some measure, her composure. Two of her particular associates, Helen Warner and Laura Ross, were there, like herself, by the request of the dying girl. To their care, Harry consigned her while he sought to minister some consolation to the minds of the distressed family. Poor trembling girls! Miserable comforters would they have been to each other had it not been for the presence of another, young like themselves, but early taught to look upon this life but as a preparation for one that never ends. Dora Jennings was the chosen friend of Julia Raymond, for it had been through her affectionate counsels and pious example, that she was led to seek that salvation that now sustained her in the dark valley.

As soon as Miss Raymond was awake, Dora conducted the awe-struck girls to the bedside, where the sight of their late blooming friend, now pale and languishing, stilled their tumultuous feelings, while they listened to her feeble voice. She reminded them of the

scenes of thoughtless mirth, in which she had mingled with them. She told them of the terrible agony she had endured when, during that time, she had found herself, on a former occasion, as she supposed, about to stand at the bar of an offended God, and of that "peace passing all understanding," that now pervaded her soul; of that Saviour who had died to procure that peace for his dying followers. With touching sweetness she warned them of their danger, while turning their backs upon that loving Saviour, and entreated them with tears, to seek his face and favor, before they were called out of life, perhaps as suddenly as she was.

She wished them all to stay with her as long as she remained. Miss Warner and Miss Ross consented, but Rose could not be induced to stay, though she promised to return in the morning. So Harry reluctantly took her home. He remained at Aspen Grove all night, for fear the faltering courage of Rose should give way. In the morning, as his engagements would not permit him to return again, Mrs. Monroe drove over with her sister to Mr. Raymond's, while he accompanied them on horseback.

When they arrived, death was almost swallowed up of life. The slight stir occasioned by their entrance seemed to recall the departing spirit. Her eyes first fell upon Harry, and with a faint smile, she moved her hand towards him. He took it, and bent down to catch the whisper.

"Where is Rose?"

"She is here, my dear sister." and he drew her forward.

"Dear Rose—meet me in Heaven.—Will you?"

But no answer came from those blanched and quiver-

ing lips. Again she turned her glazing eye on Harry. "Pray for her, brother—now—and for all."

He kneeled by the bedside, and breathed out a fervent supplication for the eternal salvation of all present especially for that one, even now on the brink of Jordan, and then for those, her loved companions, over whose souls her heart yearned in compassion, that they might, from this hour, turn from their idols to serve the living God.

At times, a gentle pressure of the hand that rested upon his, and a half uttered "Amen," told him that life and consciousness were there. But when he rose from his knees, a marble stillness was settling upon the face—one long, sighing breath—and she was gone.

CHAPTER IX.

ROSE AT CAMP-MEETING.

"With songs triumphal, under flags of peace
Spread like the wings of swans upon the wind,
They hold their siege against the walls of Wrong,
And will not rest till, on the highest tower,
Which crowns its ramparts, that white banner floats."

T. B. READ.

THE camp-meeting season had come, and Harry was requested by his presiding elder to attend several. That of his own circuit was to be held on the same ground where, four years ago, he had received that terrible revelation of his own heart, which at first almost plunged him in despair, and then brought him to the feet of the Divine Physician, who poured the balm of consolation into his bruised soul.

He rejoiced in the prospect of spending a few days again upon that hallowed spot. Not that he had waited for this occasion to visit it. His regular rides led him within a short distance of the place, and he seldom passed it without turning aside, there to commune with his own heart, and renew his vows of consecration to the service of his Lord and Master.

His colleague this year, whose name was Newton, was an old man, in feeble health, so that much of the more active duty of the circuit devolved on him. The arrangement of the camp-ground was committed to his superin-

tendence; and after that was completed, he was called off in another direction. Consequently he did not arrive at the meeting till the time of the first sermon, which as usual was preached at night.

After seeing his horse comfortably provided for, he was making his way to the preacher's tent, through the as yet imperfectly lighted walks between the tents. Hurrying on, and suddenly turning a corner, he encountered Mr. Temple. They had not met since conference, for their places of abode were far apart, and now the first consciousness of his presence was a warm embrace.

"Why, Bradford! here you are at last. I am delighted to see you. I came on the ground this morning, and have done nothing but wander about in everybody's way, looking for you. I was just going to see if I could find Pilot, and get any information from him."

"How is Sister Temple? and where is she?"

"I left her and the children in Baltimore, for I could not bear to take them away from father and mother so soon. I came here to seek consolation in you, and after all, you were not to be found."

"I was unexpectedly detained. But I am here now, and quite as happy to find you here."

"I don't know about that; for I found out last year, that when I could not have wife and babies, you were the next best thing. So come along, and let us have a moment's talk."

They entered the tent, but Harry knew Mr. Newton would be looking anxiously for his arrival, so after a few friendly inquiries, they took their places on the stand.

The next morning Harry led Mr. Temple to his favorite dell, but he was too important a person at this meeting to linger long amidst its solitary beauties. As

they entered the circle on their return, Harry exclaimed, "There is Dora Jennings, I am glad she is here. They have a tent on the ground? Do you know her?"

"Yes, very well. But she is inquiring for you. Let us join her."

They went forward and met the young lady as she was advancing eagerly towards them.

"Oh, Brother Bradford, I have been looking for you. I want you to help me, and Brother Temple too; I have a very important charge on my hands. I have brought three dear girls with me, who are, I do hope, in some degree awakened to a sense of their danger without an interest in the blood of the Saviour. Two of them I know are, but,——" she hesitated, and Harry, unable to restrain his impatience longer, broke in—

"Ah, Miss Jennings, who are they? I hope one is Rose Carter."

"Yes, Rose, Helen Warner and Laura Ross. They were all deeply affected by the death of our sweet Julia, as you are aware. I have been with them most of the time since, and I trust the impression is still resting in solemnity on their minds. Helen, I feel very much encouraged about. She wished to come, and Laura was willing to come with her. So they both together finally prevailed on Rose to accompany them, though she was at first reluctant, and still strives against the conviction she evidently feels."

As they passed on, Miss Jennings informed them that they had come out but a short time before. She regretted the absence of Mrs. Temple as her society and influence was just what she wanted for the girls, but comforted herself that she would be with them a day or two before the meeting closed.

The girls were all glad to see Harry again. A camp-ground was a new and strange place to Helen and Laura; and having been associated with him in the late solemn scenes, they felt like claiming him as more than a common acquaintance. Rose, from the effect of change of scene and circumstances had recovered more of her gay and light spirits, or was more willing to try to appear like it, than either of the others. Still, time began to hang heavy on her hands, and she had planted herself near the entrance of the tent to seek amusement in watching the passing crowds. Accordingly, she had been the first to see the approach of Dora and her party. She darted forward to meet them. Her light step and dancing eyes sent a chill of disappointment to Harry's hopes. He had expected to find some traces of the gravity and tenderness of their last meeting. But no; Rose was Rose still, and it was plain to be seen that there must be a more powerful agent than mere human sympathy, or superstitious dread to awaken a permanent distrust of herself, and determination to seek a more solid foundation for her feet. She was now the most talkative of the party, and Harry was glad when it was time for public worship. In the afternoon she found some acquaintances from the city, and passed much of the time in walking about with them.

As the meeting advanced, Helen and Laura became more and more serious and attentive to all the services, whether public at the stand, or in the retirement of the private tent. Helen was of a gentle, trustful disposition, and pressed steadily on, seeking to find Him who could speak her sins forgiven. Laura was silent and gloomy, sometimes in great distress; but doubting and ingeniously opposing whatever aids were offered by her friends.

Mr. Temple and Dora watched the progress of the Spirit's work in these lovely girls with prayerful anxiety, and mourned together over the too apparent indifference of Rose. Harry was with them when duty did not call him another way, and used all his powers to enlighten and comfort where it was needed. But Rose! inconsistent, fickle Rose! how the thought of her danger lay upon his heart as he passed about from place to place. He found, when he had time to be with her, that he could at any moment withdraw her from her gay companions, and in the unsuspecting freedom of his own heart, he rejoiced in the fact as an indication that she was not so averse to religious company and conversation as Dora feared. She would listen to him without showing those signs of weariness and restlessness that he often met with in others. It never occurred to him, that it might be the speaker rather than the subject that made her so docile. Still he could gain no insight into the state of her mind; for when she no longer could turn it away with sport and trifling, her only answer either to arguments or entreaties, was tears.

Helen soon found peace in believing; but the sight of her joy increased the despondency of Laura. It was not till several days had elapsed that she was fairly driven from every other refuge, and cast herself for mercy at the foot of the cross. Then she saw the arms that had so long been stretched out to receive her, and rejoiced in a clear sense of pardon and safety. The little band would now have been happy indeed but for poor Rose, still out of the ark of safety.

And yet Rose was not by any means so insensible as she appeared. The earnest loving words of her dying friend had stamped themselves on her memory with a

strength she vainly strove to resist. In all the little trials and vexations of her life, she had hitherto fled to scenes of worldly excitement and mirth for relief; but now those resources were not at hand. Death, the grave and judgment had fastened upon her imagination, and vain were all her struggles to shake them off.

She had become, as it were, a marked object and source of division on the ground. Even the serious part of the little community were divided in their estimate of the beautiful creature, whose stylish dress, and clear ringing laughter occasionally disturbed the sober views of propriety of some, while others, more nearly associated with Miss Jennings, Harry, or Mr. Temple, learned to adopt their feelings and watch her with prayerful anxiety. On the other hand, the gay votaries of pleasure were in a high state of indignation, that these fanatical Methodists should get her into their power, frighten her nearly out of her senses, and make her as extravagant and ridiculous as themselves. It was bad enough for them to have entrapped such a splendid fellow as Harry Bradford into their ranks. It was to be hoped they were destined to a signal defeat in this instance, at any rate.

In this condition everything remained till Tuesday, when Mrs. Temple came out. The grand point of interest with all the little party was Rose, who all feared was becoming less and less interested in the things that accompany salvation. She would no longer listen to Harry, if he approached the subject of her spiritual condition. She had become petulant and irritable, very unlike her usual joyous temperament. The new-found happiness of her friends only increased this, and she was anxious to get away from scenes and associations that

interfered continually with her efforts to banish serious thought. She declared her resolution to return to Aspen Grove as soon as an opportunity presented. But everything, in her opinion, conspired against her, and no opportunity could be found. When Mrs. Temple came, Rose thought she could leave the ground by the same conveyance that brought her out. Again she was disappointed, for the return carriage was engaged before she even heard of its arrival. In her vexation she refused to go out to preaching, and retired to indulge her displeasure by a flood of tears.

Harry's earnest desire to see Rose a Christian was unabated, and the presence of sweet Mary Temple revived his nearly fainting faith and hope. Miss Jennings had expected her brother with his wife to come out and take the head of the establishment. Some unforeseen event had prevented, and she now invited Mr. and Mrs. Temple to occupy the vacant place. This added very much to the enjoyment of all.

During the sermon, while Rose was indulging her tears alone, the clouds had been gathering and blackening in the west, but unnoticed by these dwellers in the thick grove till the increasing darkness and the hoarse voice of the thunder announced the coming storm.

Rose listened in dread as she sat in her retirement, longing for the presence of those friends whom she had so lately repulsed. But they were all gone into the congregation and she was alone in the tent. Nearer and louder came that majestic voice, and darker grew the heavy air. Now and then a flash of lightning whitened the frail walls that alone sheltered her from its fiery dart.

She had from childhood been terrified by a thunder storm, and she now threw herself on the bed, and

buried her face among the pillows, in a paroxysm of alarm. Why did they not come? How could they trust themselves thus in the open air? Then she trembled as she remembered how insufficient was her own covert from the subtile enemy. The recollection of her late angry feelings haunted her, and she tried to pray, but the spirit of prayer was a stranger to her, and would not come at her call. Tears no longer flowed, fear and self-condemnation dried them at their source.

She lay in this state, it seemed to her an age, till the wind in its fury came rushing through the branches above and around her, threatening to sweep the tent and its powerless inmate away together. Then the heavy drops of rain come plashing upon the cloth above her head. Her mind went back to the storm that had occurred the last time she had been at camp-meeting; to the calmness with which Susan soothed her fears then, and she would have given worlds could she have felt the sweet peace and confidence that filled the heart of her little friend.

Present danger soon banished all other thoughts, and for a moment she almost imagined, as the drops came faster, that she was deserted by her friends; that they had sought shelter elsewhere, and forgotten even her existence. It was far otherwise. They were listening to the earnest tones of Harry's voice, and feared not the coming tempest. They knew they could reach the tent by a few steps, and with a large portion of the assembly would willingly take a few drops of rain on their dresses, well adapted as they were to their sylvan mode of life, rather than lose those soul-stirring words, which harmonized so perfectly in their sublime eloquence with the gathering storm.

When he ceased, a powerful voice from the altar broke in upon the stillness that followed, by singing:

"The God that rules on high,
That all the earth surveys,
That rides upon the stormy sky,
And calms the roaring seas.
This awful God is ours,
Our Father and our Love;
He will send down his heavenly powers.
To carry us above."

The hymn had not proceeded far when the rain came and scattered them to their homes. The cheerful tones of their voices, as they ran in, fell in pleasant cadence upon the ear of Rose. She started up and listened, hoping they would come to her, and she was not disappointed. Mrs. Temple and Dora came together first. The pale cheeks and distressed countenance of the poor girl awakened all their sympathy. In the tenderest manner they inquired the cause of her agitation, but though she returned their caresses, she only replied by a fresh burst of tears.

The secret however was in part revealed by her clinging with convulsive energy to Mrs. Temple at every new flash of lightning. The cloud soon spent its violence, and the quiet pattering of the rain-drops upon the tent, was all that remained. Rose, though tranquillized, was not disposed to join in conversation. She was more amiable but still sad and silent.

The torrents of rain that had swept the ground, rendered preaching at the stand out of the question, and when Harry came in to tea, he told them that it was arranged to hold meetings in the different large tents.

The visitors had all departed before the shower, leaving the little family to enjoy an interval of quiet.

As evening drew on, Harry found himself and Rose the sole occupants of the front tent. He took a seat beside her, and again tried to induce her to speak openly of her feelings, but she was impenetrable.

"Why," he asked, "did you not go out to preaching this afternoon?"

"Because I did not wish to go."

"But, Rose, do you not think we ought to have higher motives than simply our wishes?"

"I don't know," she replied hastily, willing to evade the question. "I did not feel well; I am so disappointed because I cannot get home."

Harry looked sad as he answered: "I have used every exertion in my power to find a suitable conveyance for you, or even to send word to Jessie that you wished to come home, but without success."

She raised her eyes to speak, but dropped them again, unable to meet the sorrowfully affectionate gaze of his, and he resumed: "If you feel disappointment to be so painful, how can you inflict the same on your friends here, who are so anxious about you."

"I am sure, I see no reason why they should be anxious about me," and a flash of displeasure glowed in her cheek, but only for a moment. It faded as she again met those calm and steady eyes. "I have done nothing to make them anxious. They all seem very happy." A slight trembling of the lip bore witness against her, but was conquered before there was time for a reply. Harry noticed it, and taking her hand, held it with so earnest a pressure that she looked up.

"Are you happy, Rose?"

The pressure, the look, the voice were too much, and tears coursed rapidly down her cheeks. The question was repeated, in a tone more determined, but not less affectionate. Again a feeling of resentment banished the transient softness, and she drew her hand away as she answered:

"Yes—or I should be, if I were away from this place."

A pause followed, during which Rose would fain have escaped, but for the felt influence of those deep, dark eyes that she knew were still upon her, and held her in her place like a spell.

"Rose, you make me very unhappy by resisting the strivings of the Holy Spirit as you do."

She turned away her face, so that not even that could be read.

"You grieved me this afternoon, by not being in the congregation. I felt that I had a message for my sister Rose, and she was not there to receive it."

The only answer was a quick motion, almost a start.

"Rose, will you receive that message now?"

She sprung to her feet, her emotions no longer controllable. "Oh, no—not now. Harry, I cannot"—— and in spite of his entreaties she escaped, and hid herself in the sleeping-apartment.

"My sister Rose." The words so common as applied to others, had never before been addressed to her. And now, whether they were a source of pleasure or pain she scarcely knew. But they kept returning. The same words, the same tone, the same look that she knew accompanied them, though she did not see it. She wished she could indeed become a Christian like Harry. But then, the self-denial, the renunciation of worldly pleasures, the laugh of her gay associates! But all religious

people did not think it necessary to be so very strict, or to give up home and friends, as Harry did, and go out into the world as a missionary. He would not do it when he became owner of Hunter's Lodge.

That vision started a train of thought, not new, but which banished every other, and was only interrupted by the ladies coming in to prepare for going to the Baltimore tent, as there was to be a meeting there.

They urged Rose to go, but she was in no humor for a meeting in a tent, where there was no escape if the rain continued. Mrs. Temple, with her sweet sisterly tact, saw that Harry was restless and uneasy about Rose, and told him that as she should not go out till the children were asleep, perhaps Rose would come with her. He had to be satisfied with this arrangement, and the faint hope it offered.

When all were gone, Rose sat gloomily alone in the front tent, her thoughts, with their usual volatility, flying from one subject to another. She hoped that in the morning she should be more successful in finding some way to get home. Harry had tried to find a conveyance for her, and she wondered if he wished her to go. Perhaps he did; but if he was so coolly indifferent, there were others that would hail her return with rapture. How would he like that? If he cared, he would not show it. He was a strange creature, unlike anybody else. And The. Eldridge—had he returned to the city? He would be delighted to see her; but how astonished when he heard she was gone to camp-meeting. Oh, how provoking in Jessie not to send for her. Then she was again at the bedside of Julia Raymond. The pallid cheek, the cold, clammy touch of the fingers that grasped hers, the faint, gasping words and earnest eyes—the whole scene

was before her. She shuddered, with an indefinable terror, and tried to drive it from her thoughts. No, the words were still in her ear, "Dear Rose—meet me in Heaven.—Will you?" It was a most welcome relief to her superstitious dread when her reverie was interrupted by the entrance of Laura Ross, who came and sat down by her.

"Why Rose, dear, I thought you were gone to the Baltimore tent. Come, get ready; Mr. Murray is to call for me presently. Where is Mrs. Temple? we will all go together. Come, get ready."

"No, Laura; I am not going."

"Not going? Oh, Rose, do not say so. Let me find your shawl and rubbers. Where are they?"

"Laura, I wish you would leave me in peace. I am not going."

Laura put her arms round her, and looking in her face, saw that her eyes were full of tears. "Why, Rose, you are crying now. Tell me what you are thinking about, darling, and let me comfort you, if I can. Was it about dear Julia?"

She pressed closer to the bosom of her friend, but tears were the only answer. At this moment the curtains opened to admit Mr. Murray. He was one of the preachers, a man of ardent zeal in the cause; perhaps some might think of more zeal than discretion. He saw that Rose was weeping, and learned from Laura that they had been speaking of Miss Raymond. He knew Rose had been present at the time of her death. So he continued to dwell upon the subject for a while, and then pointed out the awful contrast presented by the death of one who had put off a preparation for eternity till that appalling crisis.

Thus he exhorted and prayed, till by the time Mrs. Temple joined them, the feelings of Rose were excited to a pitch of agony that admitted of no consolation. Mrs. Temple tried, in her gentle, soothing accents, to present the fullness and freeness of the Gospel to the distracted mind of Rose, but in vain. The tumult of her emotions prevented her from seeing anything but her own condemnation.

CHAPTER X.

A GREAT CHANGE.

"Terrible thought! shall I alone,
Who may be saved, shall I —
Of all, alas! whom I have known, —
Through sin forever die.

"Shall I amidst a ghastly band,
Dragged to the judgment-seat,
Far on the left, with horror stand,
My fearful doom to meet?"

The evening was wearing away. The sermon at the Baltimore tent was over, and a prayer-meeting in progress. Many interesting mourners were at the bench. Where were Mrs. Temple and Laura? They had not been there, and on looking round for them Harry discovered that Dora and Helen had gone. He spoke to Mr. Temple, and together they decided that the latter should go and see what was the cause of the detention.

Harry had been left in charge of the meeting, which was becoming more interesting and important, but all could not keep his thoughts from straying to Rose, and wondering whether she was the cause of their absence, and what new phase her waywardness had assumed. He did not wonder long. While all were singing to a plaintive air the words,

"Show pity, Lord, Oh Lord forgive,
Let a repenting rebel live."

Harry paused to rest, or perhaps his thoughts were again straying in search of the absent ones, as he leaned on the shoulder of a friend, and covered his eyes with his hand. Suddenly the notes seemed to falter on the tongues of the singers, and by one of those startling transitions that often occur during scenes of the kind, every heart and lip, as by one impulse, seemed to swell responsive as, in exulting strains poured forth the thrilling chorus,

"Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
Oh my soul."

Harry started and looked up. The throng at the entrance of the tent had opened to admit a group, the sight of which sent the blood through his heart in throbs that nearly suffocated him.

Mr. Murray came first, pushing aside the crowd to make way for Mr. and Mrs. Temple, who supported in their arms the almost sinking form of Rose, while Dora, Helen and Laura, weeping for joy, followed close behind.

Higher yet rose that outburst of praise, as with a sudden energy Rose broke from the arms that held her, and sprung forward to the mourners' bench. Catching a sight of Harry, she stretched her clasped hands towards him, and in words all broken with sobs, exclaimed, "Oh, Harry, pray for me."

He did indeed pray as he had rarely been heard to pray before. His whole soul seemed to go out in importunate cries for those who were then bowed in bitter anguish before the mercy-seat, that they might see themselves dead in trespasses and in sins, and realize, in all its magnitude, the price by which their redemption was purchased, even the sufferings and death of the Lord

Jesus Christ, the Son of God. That they might make a full surrender of themselves, soul and body, for time and eternity, to Him who had given his life a ransom for them.

As soon as the prayer was finished, Mr. Temple commenced singing,

"Arise my soul, arise,
Shake off thy guilty fear."

Before he had proceeded through the second verse, two who had long wandered in rebellion, were made willing in the day of His power to be saved on the easy terms of the gospel, and with tears of joy, united in singing the last verse:

"My God is reconciled,
His pardoning voice I hear,
He owns me for his child,
I can no longer fear.
With confidence I now draw nigh,
And Father, Abba Father, cry.

Several others were cut to the heart, and presented themselves as suppliants for mercy. It was truly a time resembling that of the rebuilding of the temple, when the hearers could scarcely distinguish between the rejoicing for the new temple, and the mourning of those who remembered and deplored the loss of the old.

No one seemed to take note of time, till the hour sounded for the close of public religious services. But no comfort had as yet dawned upon the distress of poor Rose. The trifles of this world had so long engrossed her attention, to the neglect or exclusion of more weighty matters, that although she was certainly not altogether ignorant of the plan of salvation, she had no power to apply it to herself.

She was so reluctant to leave the place that several were inclined to gratify her by closing the curtains and continuing the meeting. But Harry was too strict an observer of order to consent, so he led her, bitterly weeping, to her own tent. When they reached it, she clung closely to his arm, begging him not to leave her. Mr. Temple interposed:

"My dear Miss Carter, you as well as all of us need rest. Let me beg of you to go to bed, and in the morning we will meet again. Besides, there is some especial business that requires Brother Bradford's ear, so I think it will be necessary for him to go with me for a short time."

Rose unwillingly submitted, and Mr. Temple drew Harry away.

The rain had ceased, and the two young men turned out of the camp, seeking some place suitable for private conference, Harry wondering what the important business could be. When they were entirely alone, Mr. Temple began with characteristic directness:

"My dear Bradford, I want you to keep as much out of the way of Miss Carter as possible, till this important crisis is passed, one way or the other."

"My dear brother, you surprise me. Why do you wish that?"

"Well, it is an awkward business for me to tell you, and if you had as much vanity and conceit as most young men, it would not be necessary. Can you not guess?"

"Truth forbids me to say," replied Harry, after a brief interval, "that your expressions *vanity* and *conceit*, do not throw some light on your meaning. But if it is what I suppose, you are entirely mistaken."

"Why, Bradford, I do not think it possible that I can be mistaken. The ladies all notice it."

Harry was so long silent that Mr. Temple said, laying his hand on his arm, "Are you offended with me, Bradford?"

"No, I believe not, my dear brother; but really you have astonished me to such a degree that I scarcely know how I feel."

"Well, time will show; but, in the meantime, it will be safe to take my advice."

"I shall certainly do that."

"I hope so; an opposite course might do much harm, for it is evident to us all that your presence distracts her thoughts from more important things."

"It would make me very unhappy to believe you on many accounts, and especially, that I should then fear her convictions were not very deep."

"Oh, I do not know that that would be any proof. But, I am afraid you are a hard-hearted fellow, anyhow. So, good-night."

Harry lingered on the outside of the preachers' tent, uncertain whether to enter and try to compose himself to sleep, or to return to the woods till he had alone fairly looked in the face the startling intimations of Mr. Temple. He opened the curtain, and cast a glance around. All was quiet, but some of the beds were still unoccupied, and he was in no humor for the conversation that might ensue if the stragglers returned and found him awake. So he turned again to the silence and darkness of the woods.

The first question that presented itself was: "Can it be as Mr. Temple and others suppose?" The instant answer was an indignant "*No!* it is impossible!" But

what could lead them to think so? Surely they had no grounds for such a fancy, but the easy and familiar intercourse that had grown up with them from childhood." Satisfied on this point as he thought he was, his habit of self-scrutiny led him to inquire what his own share of blame might be, in producing such an unfortunate state of things, if it really existed. After long study, he failed to find that he had ever transgressed the bounds of mere friendship. Indeed, he feared that sometimes his disapproval of her girlish indiscretions had been too apparent in his manner. And how then could a man of Mr. Temple's sound judgment be so deceived? He was very sure Mrs. Temple was not thus deluded.

After all his reasoning, Harry could not quite throw off the burden of anxiety laid upon him by the words of his friend. It seemed as if the world had conspired to make him marry Rose Carter, whether he would or no. Oh! for one hour's conversation with his mother—his blessed mother! How quickly her calm, far-seeing eye would penetrate these clouds that obscured his path, and place everything in its true light before him. She was far away. But she always prayed for him. That idea comforted him. Again, there was one whose intercession was far more available than that of the tenderest mother. That was sufficient. He felt strengthened, and his resolution confirmed to go forward in the path of duty, trusting the future to him, "who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will."

The next morning, Mr. Temple was at Harry's bedside as soon as it was light, hurrying him to get up and come with him, for Rose was the happiest creature he had seen during the meeting.

Harry needed no other incentive, but sprung up at

this intelligence, and began dressing in haste, while ejaculations of joy and thankfulness frequently interrupted the questions with which he plied his friend.

It seemed that Mr. Temple, on his return to the tent after parting with Harry the previous night, had found its inmates up, and using every endeavor to lead the nearly distracted Rose to the outstretched arms of her Saviour. For a long time, all the gracious promises they could present appeared to fall unheeded on her ear, till late in the night, when she was enabled so to apply them to her own case, as to obtain immediate relief. Then, as her grief and terror had been extreme, so was now her ecstasy in a sense of pardon and safety.

By the time that Harry was in possession of these facts, he was dressed, and they sallied out together. On the way, Harry remarked with a smile:

"I suppose, as you have come for me, your last night's vision has passed away with other vapory shadows."

"Not at all, I assure you. Rose asked for you repeatedly, as if you, and you alone, could afford her any comfort; and it was not till she found the insufficiency of all earthly helps, that she turned to the stronghold in earnest. Now, the case is far different; for, if she is a whole-hearted Christian, you have only to give heart for heart, and all will be well."

There was time for no more, and Harry had to dispose of his vexation as well as he could. Dora came to meet them, her eyes sparkling with joy, and exclaiming:

"Oh! Brother Bradford, you are come to rejoice with us. Now all our little household are gathered in. Come and see our dear, happy Rose."

They found her, indeed, the very embodiment of happiness, reclining on a lounge with clasped hands and

eyes uplifted, uttering short expressions of joy and praise. When she saw Harry, she started up, and holding out both hands, cried:

"Oh! Harry, I am so happy! Are you not glad?"

"Yes, my dear Rose, more happy than I have words to express. I trust you have now found that true happiness which you have been vainly seeking in the empty pleasures of the world."

"Empty, indeed!" exclaimed Rose, with fervor. "Oh! I hope I may never spend another winter in the city. I have been so foolish, but now I know what real pleasure is. I shall never seek it in parties or dancing. Oh! I never was so happy in my life!"

These rapturous expressions, these new views of worldly enjoyment, were heartily responded to by Harry, and yet they left an unsatisfied feeling; and when she again spoke of flying from the city with its allurements, he remarked, with a gentle seriousness:

"But, Rose, the evil of our misspent time lies deeper than that. Of course, a true Christian would not be likely to find her happiness in things so unsatisfying and transitory. Still, avoiding gay and trifling scenes and society, will not insure a holy life. You know that, do you not?"

"Oh, yes; but you will be my teacher, and tell me what I must do, and what I must not do, won't you, Harry?"

"Certainly, I will do all I can. But, Rose, if you have no better teaching than mine, it will avail you little. We must all learn of Him in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom. We must study his will as it is made known to us in his written word, asking that his Spirit may help us to understand and obey. But what I was going to say just now was, that merely abstaining

from outward vanity and trifling was not sufficient. The whole aim of our lives must be changed. In our natural condition we worship and serve ourselves and the objects of our earthly affections, but when we are born again, it is as the children of God. Then his will and pleasure ought to be the supreme motive and object of all our thoughts, words and actions. We are no longer our own; we belong to Him."

Rose listened, looking earnestly in the face of her young monitor, but the ideas were so new to her that they rather bewildered than enlightened. Something of this was apparent to Harry, but he was ready to make every allowance for her, as she was but now made willing to learn, and he thought how pleasant it would be, if he were permitted and enabled to guide her first faltering steps in the path of divine knowledge, to watch her mind expanding and strengthening under the glorious rays of the Sun of Righteousness.

While he was engaged in this train of thought, some one commenced singing. The serious, inquiring look passed away from the eyes of Rose, and she joined with great animation in the song of praise. Harry joined too, though he felt as if he would rather have penetrated deeper into the foundation of this rapturous excitement. But there would be time for this when he could talk with her in the quiet of home. And no wonder they were all so happy—he was happy too, and most thankful.

This was the last day of the camp-meeting, and Harry saw but little of Rose. He kept away in consequence of Mr. Temple's opinion, though it still appeared to him a mere conjecture, without foundation in truth. He had engaged to assist at another meeting, and did not see Rose again for several weeks.

CHAPTER XI.

ROSE A METHODIST.

"What say they of this change?
A change indeed!
But the moon changes ever, why not she?
'Tis but another way of being fair.
Some deem this newest phase the fairest yet,
And pray it last; and others, who mislike it,
Trust in her fickleness for better fashions."

The camp-meeting season being over, the affairs of Harry's circuit returned to their usual routine, and he was glad one cool, rainy evening to find himself at the door of Mrs. Rodney's comfortable mansion. His cousins, Mr. and Mrs. Hunter Rodney, received him with every demonstration of affection. Not so their mother. She merely rose when he entered, but advanced not a step to meet him. Instead of the maternal kiss usually bestowed upon him, she coldly received his offered hand, saying, "How are you, Harry?" and then resumed her seat.

Harry had anticipated something of this kind, for he was sure she would receive exaggerated accounts of Rose's conversion, and hold him responsible for anything contrary to her views and feelings. He took his seat by her, and tried to draw her into conversation. She saw that her coldness grieved him, and really made an effort to rally her spirits, but finding it vain, she soon left the room. Harry then turned to his cousins for an explana-

tion. They both laughed, and acknowledged that it was probable their mother blamed him for the very strange behavior of Rose. Harry inquired with some apprehension, what that behavior was.

"Oh, she is very odd," replied Mrs. Rodney; "she has declared her determination to go no more into company, wears no ornaments, dresses with extreme plainness, even her curls are banished. You will scarcely know her, Harry, when you see her. I hope you will persuade her to be more rational."

"Is there no other evidence of a change?" asked Harry.

"Oh, yes, all sorts of changes. She considers it wicked to sing songs, teaches in the Sabbath school, and inveighs against all fashionable follies, as she calls them."

"Now, Lizzie, what is the use of telling Harry all that. Just as likely as not she will have forgotten these notions by the time he sees her. At any rate, it will not last long. The new winter fashions, or the first party, will bring her to her senses. In the meantime, the beaux will have a seasonable respite. I am sure it will be a mercy to The. Eldridge. Perhaps he may get a few pages of Blackstone into his head before she returns to the world."

These young persons, neither of them professing Christians, evidently viewed the change in Rose as a mere caprice, a fit subject for mirth, but Harry did not feel inclined to laugh with them, and was glad when supper was announced. They found Mrs. Rodney at the table and conversation was general. When the repast was over, she told her nephew she wished to see him in the library. He followed and seated himself beside her.

She was manifestly much discomposed, but still reluctant to speak.

"My dear aunt," said Harry, taking her hand and looking at her with an affectionate smile, "you have something against me. What is it?"

She drew her hand away saying: "What should make you suppose so Harry, unless you are conscious of having done something to cause it?"

"I am certain I have done nothing intentionally to displease you, but your manner is not to be misunderstood. Tell me in what I have offended, and perhaps I can explain it."

Touched, in spite of herself, by his manly frankness, she hesitated a moment before she again spoke.

"Yes, I am displeased with you. You are not satisfied with disappointing the hopes of your family by forsaking the church of your fathers, but now you have beguiled my poor Rose, who is as dear to me as my own children, into the same extravagance and fanaticism."

"I hope you will not find Rose either extravagant or fanatical, but rather a humble, self-denying Christian. That I am sure you will rejoice to see her."

"But I can never rejoice to see her a Methodist."

"I do not know that she has any intention of becoming one. I have never mentioned the subject to her, and think it much more likely that she will unite with the Episcopal church. Have you heard anything on the subject?"

"Nothing at all. I have seen her but once, and she seems to me to be in a most unnatural state of excitement. She talks of nothing but Sunday schools, prayer-meetings, and class-meetings."

"Very good things to talk about, are they not?"

"Of course, Harry, you understand me perfectly. They are very good in their place, and in moderation, but she is actually wild. She could scarcely give me a moment's attention, but left me to discuss some visits to a poor woman with Helen Warner, who is as crazy as she is herself."

"I shall not try to influence Rose in her choice of a church, and hope no one will. Every one's own conscience should be the guide in a step so important. But, dear Aunt Rodney, I wish we could view this change in the same light. To me it is a most delightful event. Rose was never half as interesting to me as she now is."

An instantaneous change came over Mrs. Rodney's whole aspect. "Oh, Harry, if she should join the Episcopal church, would she continue to be as interesting to you. Would you then "——

"What, my dear aunt?" said Harry, smiling at the sudden revulsion of feeling.

"Oh, Harry! you know my ardent desire—my long cherished hope—that she should be your wife."

All displeasure had vanished in the delightful hope that her favorite idea was about to be realized. She took his hand, and gazed inquiringly in his face, while she waited for his answer.

Harry could not help laughing at this evidence of her tenacity, as he said, "I really hoped you had forgotten that plan. But if you wish me to conform to your wishes, it is very impolitic to prevent Rose from becoming a Methodist. My wife must worship at the same altar with me."

"Oh, Harry, Harry!" exclaimed Mrs. Rodney, with passionate earnestness, as she rose from her seat. "How

can you be so deluded? But it will not last. Remember, I tell you, it will not, cannot last. You will return to your senses. I shall yet see you all that a Hunter should be." And turning hastily from him, with a burst of irrepressible emotion, she left the room.

Harry had learned to disregard his aunt's determination to press the subject of his marriage. Her many excellent qualities, as well as her undoubted love for him, counterbalanced the continual teasing that would otherwise have been hard to bear. But at times she so plainly indicated her opinion that the blood of the Hunters was contaminated by his mother's marriage, that all his habitual mastery of his feelings would have been insufficient, had not grace assisted him. He walked with hasty steps up and down the room, and with difficulty controlled his rising indignation. His heart swelled at the recollection of his revered father, whose name he was proud to bear—that father so little known or appreciated by these lofty and exclusive Hunters. Then he thought of his mother. How would her meek and quiet spirit view his present angry feelings? He almost felt the touch of her soft hand on his, while her pleading eyes seemed to say, "My son!"

It was enough. That voice, those eyes, could always recall his better self. He sat down and communed with his own heart, asking for more of His spirit who has taught us by precept and example not to resist evil. Then he returned to the parlor. Mrs. Rodney was not there, and as he had to leave before breakfast, he soon retired. Knowing that his aunt was an early riser, he hoped she would sleep off her displeasure and see him before he left. Ordinarily she would have insisted upon giving him an early breakfast, but now her vexation was not

to be so easily appeased, and she made no inquiry into his movements.

Sad and perplexed thought banished sleep from his pillow. He was strongly attached to his aunt, and would most gladly have gratified her at any sacrifice short of principle. But he could neither renounce the church of his preference, nor marry a woman who was not likely to go hand in hand with him, in the arduous path to which he was called.

Since the deeply interesting scenes of the camp-meeting, when he thought of Rose, it was with a degree of tenderness never before experienced. His anxious desire to see her a Christian, the alternations of hope and fear, and then the joy and thankfulness that filled his bosom, when he saw her rejoicing in hope of a glorious immortality, had drawn her very near to his heart. He knew that some as happy as she appeared had, after running well for a season, turned back to the beggarly elements of the world, and made shipwreck of faith. Yet he could not for a moment believe that this would be the case with Rose. His sanguine and hopeful nature forbade the thought, and he at last fell asleep, wondering at the strange conjecture of Mr. Temple.

The idea of leaving the house of his aunt while she was estranged from him was painful; but it was unavoidable, so he could only leave a few affectionate and conciliatory lines for her, and then depart before the family were awake.

A day of fatigue, both of mind and body, had tended to keep Harry from dwelling on his own circumstances; but when late on Saturday evening, he turned his horse's head towards Aspen Grove, it was with a foreboding of scenes, with Mr. and Mrs. Munroe, like that recently

experienced with Mrs. Rodney. He knew that they, in common with others of both families, had long rested in the belief of a union between himself and Rose, and trusted to her influence to wean him from the Methodist church. Now that the question was pending whether she would throw herself and her influence into the wrong or the right scale for their hopes, he would gladly have kept himself aloof till it was decided.

The belief that the last years of his grandfather's life would be brightened by his marriage, was a prominent point in all his cogitations; and to his astonishment, the image of Rose, renouncing the allurements of her gay life to walk with him in the self-denying path of itineracy was becoming more and more attractive. But if she became an Episcopalian, he felt that he must regard it as a divinely-imposed barrier between them. Not that for a moment he considered her growth in grace, her usefulness, her happiness, or her final salvation, in any degree perilled by such a course, but that in a connection so intimate, so holy as that of marriage, there must be but one mind, one heart in all things, especially those of the highest importance.

With some anxiety respecting the developments to be made in his history by time, he entered the family sitting-room at Aspen Grove. He was kindly welcomed by his friends, but Rose was not there. She had gone to pass the night and next day with Dora Jennings, in order to be near Oak Hill, where he was to preach on the morrow. He was disappointed, but consoled himself with the recollection that she could not have expected to see him, as he did not usually reach that appointment before morning.

Jessie, as he anticipated, was in a great state of excite-

ment about her sister, and seemed glad of an opportunity to talk with him. If Rose joined the Methodist church, the grand hope of her drawing him away from it was at an end. Jessie had so much confidence in Harry's freedom from bigotry and prejudice, that she immediately asked him to use his influence to induce Rose to join the Episcopal church, asking him plainly if he did not think it was her duty to go with her family. He in his turn acknowledged that on some accounts it would be desirable for her to do so. Still he declined giving any advice, saying, that where there were so many good reasons to draw her in different directions, and as his own preference was so decided, it would be hardly prudent for him to interfere. Jessie was silenced, but by no means satisfied. Mr. Munroe, like Mr. Rodney, was more disposed to consider the whole affair as a mere transient excitement of feeling that would pass off when she returned to town.

"When do you expect to go into town?" asked Harry.

"I fear it will be several weeks yet," was the reply. "The workmen proceed very slowly with our alterations and additions. It is well for us that Frank Austen is detained so long at the South, otherwise we should be turned out and have to go to a hotel."

Harry was glad that anything would keep Rose in the country, thus giving her a longer time to grow in a knowledge of her own weakness, and of the source whence true strength is to be derived, before she was exposed to the snares of city life.

The next morning found him early in the saddle, pursuing his way towards the little wood-embosomed chapel where he was to preach. He reached it, as he

intended, before the Sabbath school was dismissed, and entered with some hope of seeing Rose. He was not disappointed. She was there, surrounded by a little group of upturned faces full of wonder at the strange brightness of the eyes that were bent upon them, in contrast with those they were accustomed to see, drooping with languor and dimmed by suffering; for Rose had taken the place of a lady whose health had long been failing, and who was now unable to leave her bed.

Harry had time for a moment's conversation with Dora, before he went forward to the place occupied by Rose and her class. But that moment was sufficient to light up his face with a glow of pleasure as he passed on. He would indeed have scarcely known her, so entirely changed was the style of her dress; instead of the most profuse ornament and highest fashion, it was now marked by the utmost plainness and simplicity. He stood beside her and pronounced her name. She started at that well-known voice, and turning towards him, exclaimed, "Oh, Harry! how I have longed to see you!" Then frightened to find that the ardor of her expression had drawn other eyes to the spot, she turned away and busied herself with the books. Harry sat down, and after a few words began to talk with the children. This gave the impulsive girl time to recover herself, but not till he was leaving her to close the school did she raise her eyes to meet his, and then to his surprise they were swimming in tears.

During the sermon, Harry could not but notice the change in the manner of Rose. Her eyes, instead of wandering about in search of entertainment, were fastened upon his face, sometimes sparkling with animation as she drank in the cheering promises of the Gospel, and

again suffused by tears of tenderness as the speaker dwelt upon the dying love of the Redeemer.

Could this great, this delightful change, these hopeful indications, be the result of mere animal excitement? Time alone would answer this momentous question, and Harry one moment resolved not to be hasty in his judgment, and the next, blamed himself for entertaining so cold-hearted a doubt of the genuineness of her conversion. His mother had always lamented the infirmity of Rose's best purposes. But what could not grace accomplish? How many illustrious examples are to be found on record, of the weak and unstable becoming, under the guidance of a new and living principle, strong and inflexible even unto martyrdom.

Dora urged him to return with them and pass the night. Inclination would have accepted the invitation, seconded as it was by the pleading words and eyes of Rose; but duty called in another direction, and was obeyed.

CHAPTER XII.

THE FAMILY COMPACT RATIFIED.

"'Tis a recorded act; the war is o'er.
Thy little hand, my love, gives peace to Spain,
And happiness to me."

When Harry and Rose next met, the decisive step had been taken, and much to the chagrin of her family, she had identified herself with the Methodist church. Harry could not but receive the announcement of this fact, with an almost prophetic feeling that it would influence his history for life. He talked much with her, and found her heart tender. The desire for instruction seemed earnest, and her knowledge of Scripture more extensive than he could account for, till he called to mind the richness in that respect of the liturgy to which she had listened from her earliest years. All this was accompanied by a fervor of zeal that longed for some extended field of self-sacrifice. She even spoke of the life of a missionary in a foreign land.

Harry listened with beating heart and varying color, while words of endearment, too tender for their former relations, rose repeatedly to his lips, but were checked by his conscientious fear of taking a step without divine guidance. In the open disapprobation of her friends, she seemed to cling to him for support and comfort. He could not—he ought not to repulse her confidence in his

sympathy and advice, and every interview tended to dispel his cautious hesitation.

He wrote repeatedly to his mother, describing to her the wonderful transformation in Rose's character, with as much of his own thoughts and feelings as could be given in words, and ended by entreating her to come to him, if possible, that she might see and judge for herself. But Willie's health was in too precarious a condition for her to leave him. He was himself persuaded that the time for his departure was drawing near, and impelled by that belief, his sister's presence was necessary to prevent him from laboring beyond his strength to finish his work before the summons came.

Mrs. Bradford could only commend her beloved son to the direction of those principles she had so carefully and prayerfully instilled into his mind from infancy, and exhort him to take no step without first and continually seeking to know and obey the will of God. At the same time, she could not disguise from her maternal anxiety, the fear that the substructure of Rose's character was wanting in stability. But she too, could assign no limits to the power of divine grace. In trembling, but trustful hope, she committed her son to the care of Him, who, though he may see fit to subject his servants to the test of the furnace, will eventually bring them out purified and strengthened by the process. And, though she trusted that no such process would be found needful for him, she could not at times repress a feeling of regret that her favorite Susan had not been reserved for her own Harry. Then she could have rested in perfect confidence that all was right. These thoughts she carefully confined to her own bosom, and soon received the following letter from her son :

"My beloved Mother:

"What would I not give for one hour of heart-open conversation with you, in your own room, on the old sofa, for that seems to me a charmed, or rather let me say a hallowed place. How often, in my boyish troubles, have I watched with impatience for you to lay aside your sewing or book, and call for your chamber light, that I might follow you and receive that consolation, or advice, or reproof, that the occasion required; for even reproof from your loving lips, fell like an excellent oil upon my head, dispelling all the sophistries of self-love, healing all my imaginary wounds, and bringing me again under the control of that word which giveth light, and maketh clean the heart. Happy days of boyhood! But, my mother, I fear I must now give up the cherished name of *boy*, for I am engaged to be married! This announcement does not surprise you, because the tone of many of my late letters has led you to expect it. But, I assure you, it surprises me. I have so long felt it a duty to shield my heart from all such soft influences, that even now I pause at times, and ask myself whether it is right. Not that I really doubt. If I did, I should not be as happy as I am. Yes, my dear mother, I am happy—very happy! Rose, in her new character, seems to be everything that I have any right to ask. On some points, her zeal and devotion to the cause of her Master almost put me to shame. She would willingly accompany me to the desolate portions of the earth, bearing the joyful message of salvation to those who are ready to perish. Am I shrinking from the call of God? I cannot think I am. I do not hear that call, but rather feel convinced that mine is a domestic mission. My mother, my grandfather, my

dear Willie, the poor servants!—no, I dare not say: 'It is Corban, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me.' I should 'thereby make the word of God, of none effect.' . . . . . .

After all, this love that we hear so much about, is not quite what I supposed it would be. I seem to retain my sober senses, so far as I can judge, and am not carried out of myself by that rapture, that delirium of bliss that others speak of. Do you think I am as much in love as I ought to be? Rose has become very dear to me, and I have reason to think she has loved me a long time. Is it not passing strange?—for, though I have always felt a brother's interest in her, she surely was the last of all my young companions that I could have thought of marrying. But what can exceed the transforming power of the Spirit? It almost makes me tremble to find how she looks up to me for instruction and protection. May that endearing confidence never be disappointed! It is very delightful to have something of my own to watch over, to guide, to cherish. And how strange it is, that Rose's beauty, so prominent a part of her former self, should occupy so small a place in my thoughts of her! Though I allow that she is infinitely more lovely in my eyes than ever before. It is her engaging tenderness, her clinging affection, next to her ardent piety, that binds my heart to her so willingly. Are you laughing at me? I begin to think I am *at least* as much in love as I ought to be. Laugh as much as you please, dear mother, but I must ever lay open to you my whole heart—even its weaknesses. You will tell my grandfather: I think it will gratify him to hear that the old plan is probably to be carried into execution. And dear Willie, too; but I shall write to them both soon. *We* have written to

Mrs. Carter together, hoping that the news will in some degree soften her regret that Rose should have become a Methodist. I have long resisted the wishes of all, I believe, except yourself and Willie, who have a drop of Hunter or Carter blood in their veins. But I resist no longer. I am a willing captive. You laugh again, and I care not. I am, and still will be,

"Your own affectionate *boy*,

"HARRY.

"P.S.—I shall see Aunt Rodney to-morrow. She is very angry with both of us, but I think I can now offer terms of peace that she will ratify. HARRY."

Harry went the next day, according to his intention, to visit his aunt. He had called once before since the conversation in the library, but she had excused herself on the plea of indisposition. He doubted not the truth of that plea, yet felt certain that its cause, as well as her refusal to see him, was her increased displeasure since Rose had degraded herself, as she expressed it, by becoming a Methodist. No headache, or any slight indisposition, would otherwise have prevented an immediate summons to her room. It is not to be supposed that the good lady had the remotest idea of a permanent feud with her god-daughter, still less with the heir apparent to her family honors. She only considered it incumbent upon her to manifest her disapprobation of such childish irregularities.

On this occasion, Harry was permitted to see her in her room. Her manner was even more cold and stately than before. When he approached to kiss her, she turned away and pointed him to a chair at

some distance from her own. Harry drew it near, and inquired in the kindest terms about her health. After a brief reply, she asked if he had heard lately from Hunter's Lodge. He told her that he had received a letter from his mother the day before, mentioning the continuance of Willie's cough and the increase of his debility. Mrs. Rodney listened with a deep sigh, which Harry feared was given not only to her grief at Willie's decline, but also to the unworthiness of his successor. She made no remark, but introduced some subject of no interest to either of them. Harry was determined not to be put off in that way, so he drew his chair still nearer, and began:

"Aunt Rodney, I am very sorry you are displeased with me, and have come expressly to ask you to forgive me. Come, let us make peace."

"I do forgive you, Harry," she answered. "As a Christian it is my duty to do so; but I wish you were sorry for having conducted in such a way as to require it." Here she raised her eyes so suddenly as to catch something very like a smile quivering on Harry's lips, as he replied:

"But I have been trying lately, to behave in such a way as to secure your approbation."

She looked up one moment inquiringly, but the expression did not please her, and she dropped her eyes again instantly in silence. Harry sat watching her face, and considering how next to proceed. It would have been most like himself, at once to have mentioned his engagement, but a spirit of teasing and mischief had, for a rarity, taken possession of him. So, controlling his voice as well as he could, he proceeded:

"Aunt Rodney, now that you say you have forgiven

me, for which I most heartily thank you, I have a matter of great importance to communicate to you, and as it nearly concerns my future happiness, I hope you will not withhold your sanction."

"Harry, I do not wish to hear it. You have shown no disposition to gratify my wishes, and advice from me would be thrown away."

"Advice, my dear aunt, would indeed be too late. It was to obtain your approbation of a step already taken, that I came to you. A very important step—no less than an engagement for life."

"An engagement for life! To what?" she asked, now quite startled out of her coldness.

"An engagement to love and cherish, as my wife"——

"Who?" she almost screamed, grasping his arm.

"Rose Carter."

Mrs. Rodney started to her feet, and Harry rose with her. She looked at him in utter bewilderment. "Harry Bradford, would you insult me by this cruel jesting?"

"No, my dear aunt, not for worlds. I speak the solemn truth. I am engaged, heart and hand, to Rose."

She threw her arms round his neck—she wept—she even sobbed hysterically—while Harry, perfectly incapable of comprehending this absorbing passion of her soul, this ever active, never sleeping watchfulness over the interests of her family, could only strive to calm her by word and gesture, while he blamed himself for what he was now ready to consider his unseasonable levity. Again and again he begged her to forgive the vexation he had occasioned her."

"I will—I do forgive you, my child," she said, when at last she could speak. "But, O Harry! how severely you have tried me you cannot conceive. You, who do

not seem to care whether the blood that flows in your veins was derived from prince or peasant."

"You mistake, my dear aunt. I sometimes fear I am too proud of my ancestors, and am in danger of forgetting that all my advantages will but increase my condemnation, if I fail to follow their pious example."

"Oh, you refer to your Puritan descent. That is all very well, to be sure—but from what did the Puritans spring, Harry?"

"From a noble source. They were born of God. Their fathers, according to the flesh, were kings and priests unto God. Their inheritance was the Lord God of Israel, and they now swell the shining ranks of those who ascribe blessing and honor, and glory, and power, unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever."

Silent, and for the time subdued, Mrs. Rodney gazed upon the expressive eyes and lips of her nephew while he spoke. She could in some degree partake of his chastened enthusiasm, but not by any means to the exclusion of the comforting recollection that this noble and eloquent scion of the venerated pilgrims was, in part, also a Hunter. Thus touched, her feelings naturally fell back into their wonted channel.

"But, Harry, tell me how this marvellous change was brought about. I really feel almost like thanking you, as if it was in some sense a personal favor."

"Do not give me more credit than I deserve. I assure you, that so long as Rose continued the thoughtless votary of this world's pleasures, she could have been nothing to me but an object of affectionate pity and anxiety. My choice must be one

"'Who would leave the glittering hall
Where beauteous fashion reigns,
To share her life, her joys, her all,
With one who heeds not fashion's call,
And will not wear her chains.'

"True, Rose might have been all that, even if she had chosen the path that I regard next to my own, that of a devout Episcopalian. But then I should have steeled my heart against her fascinations. It is only to one that can walk in the same path with me, close by my side, that I am willing to give my heart. I believe if I have, in my character, one point weaker than another, it is that which unconditionally surrenders to female influence, and for that reason especially I must be careful to whom I expose that weak point."

"I have not found you so easily influenced."

"Not certainly on the subject now before us. There you came in contact with some of the stern Puritan self-will, of which I believe I possess a full share. And then, too, your influence was counteracted by that of my mother, which was the stronger."

"Did she ever exert her influence to prejudice your mind against Rose?" and her eyes flashed as the words came rapidly from her lips.

"Never! my mother has long ceased to control my actions. It has been her object from my earliest recollection to prepare me for self-government, by planting within me those principles which ought to guide and restrain a responsible being to train me in the habit of bringing all my thoughts and actions to the test of the revealed word of God, and now, though ever ready to counsel me as a friend, she leaves me to act for myself.

She loves Rose—has always loved her, and now longs to see her and receive her as a daughter."

"Well, you and your mother, I must say, are very much alike. You are both,—I suppose I may say, *firm*."

Harry met the smile that accompanied these words with one of his own sunshiny ones, as he replied: "Do not be afraid to call it in my case obstinacy. It used to give me a deal of trouble, under that name."

"I cannot see that the foe is entirely conquered yet. But, my dear Harry, I hope you will not let it have the mastery, so far as to prevent you and Rose from coming together into the church, when your eyes are opened, as I am sure they soon must be, to its great superiority."

Again Harry smiled, as he good-humoredly waived any notice of his aunt's appropriation of the title to her own branch of the church, but it faded into a grave thoughtfulness, as he replied to her last remark:

"It seems to me, my dear aunt, that we should now and henceforth fully understand each other. And first, let me entreat that you will dismiss from your mind all expectation of my being the proprietor of Hunter's Lodge. There are two most dear and valuable lives between me and that (to my feelings) undesirable inheritance. The slightest allusion to it, pains me exceedingly."

"But Harry, when it is so manifest that my brother and his only son—as dear to me, my child, as they can possibly be to you—that they both, I say, are fast passing away, do you not see that it is your duty to prepare yourself for the distinguished position to which you must so soon succeed?"

"I beg of you, Aunt Rodney, to refrain from these remarks. If, in the providence of God, I am ever called

to fill that place, and it is my constant and earnest prayer that it may, if ever, be far, far distant, I humbly trust that He who places me in a situation so uncongenial to my views and feelings, will at the same time give me the requisite grace to discharge its duties to his honor and glory, and to the temporal and eternal well-being of all who may thus be committed to my care. But again I entreat that in the meantime it may be left to Him alone." After a short pause, he resumed in a calmer tone. "Your affection and approbation are of great value to me; but do not be displeased with me again, though I feel constrained to say that there is not the slightest ground for your hope of my changing my position in the church, and after what I have already said, you would not wish to take Rose away from me, would you? Just consent to take us as we are, your wayward, self-willed, but affectionate children; bear with us, love us as such, and we will try to be good and dutiful in other respects."

It was impossible to resist the sweetness of manner with which this was said; neither could Mrs. Rodney again refuse the kiss that was offered as a seal to the compact.

Still she persevered: "But if Rose should wish to return, you would not surely oppose her, Harry."

"Why there is not the least prospect of that," said Harry, laughing at this pertinacity. "She is a more zealous Methodist than I am. On the contrary, if I could be induced to make the change, I am afraid she would renounce me."

And thus they parted, Harry calmly resting in the delightful belief that perfect harmony of views and objects existed between him and his betrothed; and

Mrs. Rodney, in the full persuasion that they must sooner or later become dissatisfied with their present position, rejoicing that one great obstacle to the accomplishment of her plans was removed, and there was no longer any danger of Harry's connecting himself with some unknown individual, that she could never endure to see presiding at Hunter's Lodge."

CHAPTER XIII.

FANATICISM NOT RELIGION.

"The Christian is not ruined by living in the world, which he must needs do while he remains in it, but by the world living in him."—BAXTER.

RESISTING all entreaties to tarry till morning, Harry took leave of his friends in the city, and with lover-like haste pursued his way to Aspen Grove. Mr. Monroe and Jessie were beginning to lose their displeasure at the course adopted by Rose, in the undisguised satisfaction which pervaded the family, when the long desired engagement was made known. So Harry found himself received with more than usual cordiality.

The life of a faithful preacher, especially on a circuit, leaves little time for idle love-making. But Rose had various plans to discuss, either of which, in her confident belief, would result in the conversion of the world. She only waited for Harry's sanction to commence operations. "As to Edward and Jessie," she said, "they did not sympathize with her at all. They only laughed at her, and said she would soon get tired. Even Dora, to her surprise, was almost as indifferent, and advised her to continue to teach in the Oak Hill Sabbath School, and not attempt to establish another near Aspen Grove at present." To her amazement, Harry entirely concurred in their views, reminding her how soon she would return to the city.

"Oh, the city!" she exclaimed, "how can you mention it, Harry? I cannot bear to think of it, and intend to spend every Sunday out here, either with Mary Austen or Dora. Indeed, I do not see but that I must be here nearly all the time, for I am going to Oak Hill when you preach, at any rate; and I must be at class on Thursday."

"Do you not think it would be better to move your membership at once to Eutaw? That is the nearest to to Mr. Monroe's house."

"Oh, Harry, do not ask me to leave my sweet little girls in Sabbath school, and my class. I could not, indeed."

"But, dear Rose, the field is world wide, and you will find a class in town that you will love as much as this you now attend, and children quite as much in want of instruction. Remember, dearest, that you are to learn the lesson of tearing yourself away from those you love, and going from place to place, scattering the good seed. That is the kind of life to which you were devoted when you gave yourself to me."

"Oh, yes, I know that; but I cannot bear to think of living in that dreadful city. I would rather go back to Gaywood and spend the winter."

"And leave me alone, Rose?"

"Oh, I did not think of that, dear Harry," she replied, laughingly. "No, I cannot do that. You could not do without me. Could you?"

The look and action that accompanied these words satisfied the lover, and banished the momentary feeling of discomfort.

"But, Harry, you will so seldom be in Baltimore, and when you are there, you always have so many meetings

to attend, and your Aunt Rodney thinks you must stay with her."

"Aunt Rodney will want us both with her as often as possible; but, of course, she will not wish to keep me away from my own Rose. I can be as much in the city as I could at Aspen Grove; and as to the meetings, I hope you intend to go with me. Do you not?"

"Certainly I do. That will be delightful. But I do not expect to find much pleasure in the society of Mrs. Rodney, or Jessie either. They do not feel as I do. Just think of the trials I shall have to encounter. Jessie will go to all the parties, and I know she will insist upon my going with her, and be displeased if I do not. How I shall want you to defend me."

Though Harry had smiled at the wildness of some of her schemes, yet the simplicity—perhaps under other circumstances, he might have thought the *childishness* of her confidence in her own efforts—was in his present state of mind a charm. And he was sufficiently under the wand of the enchanter to see, in her last remark, only the pretty half-pouting smile, that called for a caress rather than a reproof. But yet, true to himself, he answered in sound reason:

"My sweet Rose, how gladly I would be with you, I can scarcely tell you. But you must not forget that there is One to defend you, and direct you, far more able than I am. In your case, I am aware that scenes of gaiety and fashion would be more insnaring from the force of habit, than almost any others, and I hope you will not be obliged to appear in parties of that kind."

"Why, Harry! do you think I ought ever to go to another party?"

"Not, certainly, dearest, when it can be avoided.

But you cannot forsake the social position in which you were born. Only let your affections be set on things above, and others will then assume their relative places. Jessie has always given, I believe, one party at least during the season, and while you are with her, it would perhaps be too marked a disrespect to her and her friends for you to absent yourself from the rooms entirely. The blessed Saviour attended a wedding feast with his disciples, besides other places of like character that might be mentioned, and frequently alluded to them, without censure, in his discourses."

"Well! I never expected to hear you advocate fashionable parties."

"I am far from doing so now, my dear Rose, for I have no pleasure in them, and always keep out of them when I can. Christians are necessarily brought in contact with an unfriendly world more or less every day, and so that we do not seek after it, and delight in it, we shall be shielded from the evil. The great point is to preserve our distinctive character as Christians, wherever we are, and we shall learn to avoid situations in which it is impossible or even difficult to do so. When I can take you, my beloved, with me, it will be much easier for you, as the wife of a minister, to avoid these uncongenial scenes. Then we can adopt the simple and natural life that our tastes prefer without giving offence. In the meantime, you are here, in the family of your brother and sister, neither of them professing Christians; seek constantly that grace which can alone enable you to 'walk in wisdom towards them that are without.'"

Rose was silenced by these arguments rather than satisfied. Her new-born zeal was burning to take some high

and shining path to illustrate the character in which she was about to appear among her former associates.

Several conversations of this kind occurred, in which Rose displayed more consideration for her own personal comfort, than a spirit of self-sacrifice to duty, or even than a disinterested desire to cheer and alleviate the fatigues of her lover. They were not without their natural effect; and Harry was conscious of a latent feeling of depression when he had parted from Rose, without being able exactly to define it. While he was with her, this prevailing selfishness was so continually intermingled with graceful and fascinating endearments, that it was not noticed; and now, though he sighed under its pressure as he rode along his rural path, he imagined it was caused by a feeling of responsibility for her comfort. He had entered already on the delightful duty of providing, to the best of his ability, for the happiness and welfare of this beloved one, who had given herself to him, and for the first time he felt disposed to complain of the strictness of the discipline, as opposing a barrier to his impatience. If he could at once marry and take Rose away from those scenes so distasteful to her present feelings, how much better it would be. She would be so much happier. It was indeed a severe ordeal, at best, for her youth and inexperience. If she could be with him, in some quiet country home, they could read and study together. He could often take her with him in his rides, and he even fancied he could preach with more effect if she were present. But with another sigh he was compelled to acknowledge that it could not be—not even before two long years at least.

In proportion as Willie's health had declined, the wish of both families had become stronger to hasten the mar-

riage of Harry and Rose. Though no one ventured to express it as plainly as Mrs. Rodney, yet Harry could not avoid seeing it exhibited in the others more indirectly. His affectionate heart had been continually pained because he found in himself no disposition to comply with their wishes. But when he had every reason to believe that a radical change had been wrought by divine grace in the character of the beautiful girl, that all were so anxious he should marry, neither conscience nor judgment seemed longer to oppose. Having once laid aside his cautious guard over his heart, what young man of twenty-two but would have yielded to "the engrossing and subjugating passion," especially when assured by more than one person that the object had already given her heart to him. When, with a tear and a blush of exquisite beauty, she confessed that she had long loved him and suffered from his coldness, could he resist the soft reproach that spoke in eyes, "so large, so languishingly dark?" No, "Love flings a halo round the dear one's head." Harry was human, and for a time, soul and sense bowed before the potent spell of woman's love.

Harry had promised Rose that he would see her again in two weeks. This he could accomplish by a little extra riding in his rest-week, either at Aspen Grove or in Baltimore. Accordingly he was at the former place at the time appointed. As he drew near the house, he met Rose walking alone under the beautiful grove of trees that gave name to the place. She had been watching for him impatiently all day. He dismounted as soon as he saw her, and led his horse while they strolled slowly towards the house together.

She told him that they were all in preparation for a

remove to town. Their house was ready for them, and the Austen's would resume possession of Aspen Grove in a few weeks.

Rose was in high excitement, but whether of joy or grief she was scarcely able to ascertain herself. First, her pleasure at seeing Harry absorbed all other thought. Then she dwelt on the pain of parting with her classmates and her Sabbath school, and the certainty of finding nothing in town to compare with the privileges she was leaving.

"And you know, Harry," she added, while bright drops glittered on her dark lashes, as she raised her eyes to his face, "I shall never hear you preach in Baltimore."

"Oh, yes, you may, dearest, I sometimes preach in Baltimore," was the fondly uttered reply." But, at any rate, you will hear far better sermons than I could give you. And then, you know, after a while, you will hear scarcely anybody else. You will be so tired of hearing me, that you would do well to put it off as long as you can."

This brought again the smile to her face, though she persisted that she did not want to hear any one else, and Harry was beginning a more grave expression of his unwillingness to hear her speak in that way, when a servant came to take the horse. The next step they met Mr. Munroe, and the subject of the return to town occupied them till they were called to supper.

Harry learned with regret that Susan Allington would not return with her sister at this time, but would make a visit of some weeks at her brother's. Here was another source of lamentation to Rose, who had resolved that Susan should stay, at least half the time, in the city with her. Again an uneasy feeling pressed heavily upon Har-

ry's heart, while he listened to these complaints and forebodings of Rose, so different from "the kindly tones of cheer," with which his mother had been wont to soften and brighten the little adverse circumstances of life. For himself, with his buoyant and manly spirit, events of so little comparative importance failed to reach the deep spring of peace and contentment, that was ever welling up from his heart, and cheering all around him. But now it was not himself, it was another, far dearer than self, that was the object of his solicitude. Her happiness had been generously confided to his care, and in the romance of "love's young dream," he could not endure that a cloud should mar the brightness of those eyes that beamed upon him a tenderness so beguiling.

On each occasion, by arguments and caresses, half serious, half sportive, he could chase away the shadow, and for a time restore sunshine, while he pictured, with all the glow of his own self-devotion, a life spent in efforts to extend the kingdom of the Redeemer. Then her enthusiasm caught the flame, and she panted to enter at once upon the field of itinerant duties and privations. She could glory in toil and suffering in such a cause; and with such a companion, as she more than intimated, she was ready to spring forward upon a pilgrimage to the desolate regions of the earth.

Poor child of impulse! She knew not what manner of spirit she was of. Though naturally endowed with great sweetness of temper, she had from her infancy been flattered and petted by all about her, till selfishness had struck its envenomed roots into every better quality of her nature. Now, though at a distance, acts of Christian benevolence and self-denial seemed easy and delightful, she shrunk from the slightest present inconvenience.

Harry had been educated in another school. The soil of his heart had been so carefully prepared for the reception of the good seed, that unskillful observers might have thought the natural fruits were of the planting of the Lord. But he was not so deceived, and when the shower of divine grace descended, he felt the infusion of a life-giving principle that earthly culture could never imitate. Believing that Rose was the subject of the same vital change, he looked with undoubting confidence for the same heavenly effects, and hailed every outburst of zeal as a bud of grace, the blessed precursor of the full harvest.

After Mr. and Mrs. Munroe became settled in town, they tried in vain to induce Rose to enter again the fashionable circles to which she had been accustomed. She could rarely even be persuaded to pass the evening in the family sitting-room, if there was any company. Her former associates, after a few fruitless attempts to draw her again into their amusements, left her to herself, bewailing the gloomy eclipse of their brightest star. Unhappily she had not within herself those resources which could have made her independent of them. She had never acquired a taste for solid literature, and now, though she resolutely perused the books that Harry's care provided for her, it was only as a task, and failing to perceive their hidden sweetness, she soon wearied of reading, and pined for society.

The revivals in various parts of the circuit, subsequent to the late camp-meeting, required Harry's presence more than she was willing to consider necessary. She had talked over her engagement with Mrs. Rodney to the entire satisfaction of both, but on that subject alone did any sympathy now exist between them, and they unin-

tentionally but naturally shunned each other. Mrs. Rodney comforting herself with hopes of future changes, and Rose seeking for more congenial associates. Miss Jennings, whose refined and cultivated mind made her a welcome guest in any society, used her best endeavors to counteract this fanatical exclusiveness; but she had other duties in her own sphere, and could not always be at hand to check or direct the unsteady impulses of her friend.

The next house to that of Mr. Munroe was occupied by a family with whom Jessie and Rose had always been on terms of good neighborhood. They were Methodists in easy circumstances, excellent in all the relations of life, and truly religious, but neither high-born nor accustomed to the style of living that Mrs. Rodney and the Munroes considered essential. Here Rose found a refuge from the ennui that was beginning to take the place of her late excitement. With them she could always find companionship, either at their fireside, or in attending the various religious meetings about the city. This was another cause of division, and sometimes, it must be confessed, of dispute and recrimination, between her and those before whom her light should have shone with a steady and attracting lustre.

Little of all this, of course, could be known to Harry in his short visits. Rose had, to be sure, her little tale of trials for his ear, and while he soothed the griefs that so fondly sought a balm in his sympathy and love, he could not forbear smiling at the exaggerated view she seemed to take of what she called her persecutions. He pointed out to her the lightness of those afflictions, which are often needful, and when properly received and improved, tend by their friction to keep the Christian's armor bright.

But these hours of endearment were too precious to be saddened by such themes, and he soon led her mind to more healthy topics. Then again she brightened, and by her smiles banished every unpleasant recollection. She accompanied him to various meetings of deep interest, and enjoyed with him, in an imperfect degree it must be allowed, the eloquent and able discourses to which they listened, or the fervent prayers, and exulting songs of praise, which accompanied them.

When, as was sometimes the case, Harry was the speaker, with what pride she caught the many expressions of admiration that fell from the lips of the departing congregation, while she lingered in the seat, waiting for him to break away from the cordial grasp of friendship, and hasten to her side.

At first she began eagerly to repeat to him the praises so grateful to her own ear, but with the utmost solemnity he stopped her, begging that she would never attempt it again. In vain she tried to laugh him out of his *over modest sensitiveness*, as she called it. He was too serious, too determined, and after a few more attempts she was compelled to yield. Subsequently, she could only solace her gratified feelings by fondly whispering to herself, "He is mine—all mine. This thrilling eloquence, this manly beauty, is all mine." Mistaken girl! Yours? No; these gifts, these graces, even the rare maturity of mind which thou art incapable of appreciating—yes, even thyself, dear as thou art—all are laid, a free-will offering on the altar of his God. It is the dearest wish of his heart for thee, that thou shouldst be a chosen vessel, consecrated to the Master's use, in that sphere where he has placed thee. Canst thou meet this high destiny? Canst thou, with woman's gentle,

but unswerving constancy keep thy honored place by his side while he heeds and obeys the call.

"Soldier go—but not to claim
Mouldering spoils of earth-born treasure,
Not to build a vaunting name,
Not to dwell in tents of pleasure.
Dream not that the way is smooth,
Hope not that the thorns are roses;
Turn no wistful eye of youth
Where the sunny beam reposes.
Thou hast sterner work to do,
Hosts to cut thy passage through;
Close behind thee, gulfs are burning.
Forward! there is no returning.

"Soldier, rest; but not for thee
Spreads the world her downy pillow;
On the rock thy couch must be,
While around thee chafes the billow;
Thine must be a watchful sleep,
Wearier than another's waking,
Such a charge as thou dost keep,
Brooks no moment of forsaking.
Sleep, as on the battle-field,
Girded, grasping sword and shield.
Foes thou canst not name nor number,
Steal upon thy broken slumber."

That is the destiny to which he aspires. Dost thou shrink at the prospect? Then loose thy grasp upon the soaring spirit, thou art not its mate!

CHAPTER XIV.

PAIRED NOT MATCHED.

"Is there within thy heart a need
That mine cannot fulfill?
One chord that any other hand
Could better wake or still?
Speak now, lest on some future day
My whole life wither, and decay.

"Look deeper still. If thou canst feel
Within thy inmost soul
That thou hast kept a portion back,
When I have asked the whole,
Let no false pity spare the blow,
But in true mercy, tell me so."

THE Austens had been several days established at their own home, when Harry came again into that part of the circuit. On his first visit he learned with surprise that the engagement so plainly inferred from Mrs. Allington's last letter had in reality never taken place. That a strong attachment had existed on the part of Mr. Marcus Selden was true. Mrs. Allington had supposed it was reciprocated by her daughter; but there was where the mistake began. Mr. Selden, from the time of his introduction by his cousin, had been on terms of easy and familiar friendship in the family, and his devotion to Susan was apparent to all but herself. The rapidly declining health of her mother, as well as causes existing in the silent depths of her own heart, had entirely prevented her from noticing the increasing tenderness of

his manner. The formal disclosure was delayed by the death of Mrs. Allington. After that event, the poor girl was at leisure to see and note more of passing events. Then she saw at once the state of the case. Then, as light began to dawn upon her mind, she could understand several expressions of her mother's that at the time were involved in mystery. Roused, almost shocked, she at once adopted the same line of conduct that had been effectual in the case of his cousin. But he could not so easily recover himself. When he could no longer be deluded by the belief that her reserve and evident determination to avoid seeing him alone were to be ascribed to her grief, his hopes and his happiness departed together. He could no longer bear to remain where he must be continually reminded of her. He left home and soon after sailed for Europe.

Harry could not but think it strange that Susan should have refused two suitors in every respect so unexceptionable, but he had little time to dwell upon the circumstances, or to consider how it might have affected him, had his heart been disengaged, for he was almost immediately required by his presiding elder to attend a protracted meeting on a neighboring circuit. To his great regret, this happened just about the time of his usual visit to Baltimore. He could only write to Rose, informing her of this sudden call and his consequent disappointment. Rose was even more chagrined than he was, for she now scarcely found enjoyment in anything out of his society.

To overcome the indifference of the only one who seemed to resist the supremacy of her charms had long been a prominent object of her ephemeral life. This grand victory was at last achieved, and Harry Bradford was

her captive. Her captive, but not to the extent that satisfied her craving for absolute dominion. His duties as a minister were paramount to his allegiance to her, and the exacting beauty could ill brook his frequent and long absences. He was her last conquest, and the one of all in which her heart was most interested, if, indeed, one so selfish could be said to possess a heart. He was far handsomer than any of her other admirers, and above all, heir *very apparent*, to the fine estate, lying in immediate contiguity to the few acres to which alone she was heiress.

Cut off as she now was from all her wonted sources of enjoyment, she surrendered herself to this one object with all the ardor and impulsiveness of her nature. An instinctive dread of offending him, deterred her from expressing the longing that haunted her lonely hours, for her old associates and amusements. His presence and affection satisfied her at the time, but religious occupations had lost their charm with their novelty, and could she but have taken Harry with her, most gladly would she have returned to that world so lately abandoned.

She had become weary of the uncongenial habits and manners of her neighbors, and still more of the succession of prayer-meetings, class-meetings and love-feasts upon which they urged her attendance. In a condition truly pitiable, she frequently shut herself into her room for hours together, brooding gloomily over her sorrows, sometimes passionately weeping, and at others, sunk in sullen apathy from which only the anticipated visits of her lover could arouse her.

This last disappointment, when she had so confidently expected him the next day, was more than she could

bear with any degree of composure. Her tears and evident unhappiness called forth the sympathy of her sister, who forgetting the many unkind repulses her well meant efforts to comfort her had received, after some persuasion induced her to ride out with her and Mr. Munroe. Their lively conversation cheered her drooping spirits, and she began to listen with interest to accounts of pleasant parties and gay sallies of wit among her young friends. Altogether the time passed so pleasantly that when, on returning to the city, they met Mr. Eldridge, she was not sorry that he accepted a seat in the carriage and an invitation to finish the evening with them.

He had recently returned to the city, and though he had called repeatedly, it was only to join in the general lamentation over the strange infatuation of his once adored Miss Carter. This evening, for the first time, he found her willing to relax a little of her cold reserve, and to bestow upon him some of those smiles upon which he professed to live. As she entered her room to lay aside her bonnet and mantle, the very place reminded her of the almost conventual seclusion to which her superstitious and fanatical views had condemned her. The sight of a book she had been vainly endeavoring to read, excited a feeling of disgust that she could no longer disguise from herself. "Must she try again to fasten her wandering thoughts upon its unintelligible pages?" Just then a ringing laugh from the parlor caught her ear. She tossed the book from her dressing-table, and hastily arranging her hair with a little more attention than she had recently bestowed upon it in Harry's absence, she joined the family below.

In spite of herself, her spirits rose as she received the obsequious attentions and flatteries so liberally offered.

Jessie was overjoyed to see her so much like herself, and thus encouraged, resolved to persevere till these new, and in her opinion, absurd notions were forgotten. Absurd they indeed were, for it had become painfully evident, even to her Christian friends, that hers was one of those unhappy cases, too often seen, of uninstructed youth, terrified by the representations of others, rather than by the teachings of the Spirit, and then too hastily and incautiously assured of pardon and peace. What would be more natural than that a weak or inexperienced mind, thus agonized by fear of everlasting burnings, should eagerly grasp the comfort held out by these assurances, and exchange tears and bitter lamentations for shouts of joy. Having no previous knowledge on the subject, such can only receive with implicit credence the opinions of their friends.

Poor Harry, full of the undoubting confidence of youth with little experience of such cases, and urged by the wishes of his friends, fell into the snare. As yet, only a momentary doubt of the genuineness of the change had entered his mind, to be instantly banished as unworthy of a place there. True, he sighed repeatedly to find that religion had not done for Rose what it never promises to do. It had not at once given strength and richness to a mind previously neglected and habituated to trivial pursuits. But even this thought made but a transient and vague impression, for the spell was on him. His eyes were holden by the great magician, and so necessarily abridged had been their intercourse, that the veil was yet upon them.

On returning to his own field of labor, he would not allow himself the indulgence of a visit to Baltimore, till he came round to it in regular order. Some days before

that could occur, he received a letter from his mother, informing him of the increased violence of Willie's cough, and consequent prostration of strength. She said he was enjoying great peace of mind, believing the time of his departure was near. He ardently desired that Harry would fulfill his promise by hastening to him, that he might see and converse with him once more. Mrs. Bradford hoped he was not in immediate danger, but wished he might be indulged by a visit from Harry without delay.

Knowing that such a call might be expected at any time, Harry had abstained from visiting his beloved home, that he might feel free to go when the summons came. He therefore hastily cut across the circuit to meet his colleague and explain the cause of his absence. Then he hurried to Baltimore to see and take leave of Rose.

As the stage would leave some hours before daylight, Harry determined to pass the night at the hotel; so, leaving his valise, he set off to the house of Mrs. Rodney, preferring to make a short call there first, that he might spend the remainder of the evening uninterruptedly with Rose.

He found his aunt alone, and informed her of the melancholy cause of his present journey. The account of Willie thus fading away so early touched her tenderer feelings. The image of his beautiful and vigorous childhood, the terrible accident, the agonizing suspense with which they watched around his bed of suffering, all were vividly recalled, and for a while she wept in silence. But Harry sat beside her, and although his name was still Bradford, and his words and looks were full of sorrow, his very presence recalled her from the gloomy present to the

brightening future. Her tears were dispersed, and though she dared not give her feelings words, she was comforted. The evening was dark and inclement, betokening a stormy morrow, or she would almost have decided to take the stage with her nephew. She charged him with messages of love to the dear invalid, and secured a promise of the earliest information of her condition. Harry could stay no longer, but leaving his adieus for his cousins, who were dressing for a party, he rapidly traversed the few squares between him and the house of Mr. Munroe.

The carriage was at the door, and Harry met Mr. and Mrs. Munroe just coming out. They started early to call for a friend on their way to the same party where the Rodneys were going. Quickly answering their inquiries as to his sudden appearance among them, he asked for Rose, and hearing that they had just left her in the parlor alone, he bade them good bye, stepped noiselessly through the hall, and unannounced entered the room.

Rose had resisted all the entreaties of her sister to make one of the guests at the house of their friend, for she had not yet obtained her own consent to reënter the whirlpool of fashion, though her scruples were gradually yielding to her natural thirst for the excitements of dress and admiration. She listened to the retreating wheels, and then her forced composure gave way in a burst of tears. Just at this crisis Harry opened the door and stood before her. Shocked and distressed, he hastily moved forward pronouncing her name. She started up, and with a scream of glad surprise threw herself into his arms. The tears that commenced in discontent now flowed freely for joy. But the tender and anxious questions of her lover must be answered.

At first her replies, vague and unsatisfactory, failed to impart the information he repeatedly asked, for she was unwilling to confess the truth, that she wept for the brilliant saloon, and the thoughtless mirth of the gay throng now about to assemble. At last she managed to make it appear that her tears were caused by his absence, which was in part true, though it was not the immediate and chief cause. Notwithstanding the flattering tribute to himself, there was still a something which he could not understand. Her sister had made no allusion to her being unhappy or weeping. He could not, he would not doubt her truth, but her embarrassed and uncertain replies to his first alarmed inquiries left an unpleasant impression on his mind, and though he put it away for the time, it came back, and troubled him on his journey in the dark stage.

"But, my beloved Rose," he asked, when her agitation had subsided, "if you thus distress yourself in my absence now, how will you bear it when I leave you alone among strangers? Come, cheer up. You must have a brave heart, or you will not do for a preacher's wife. You will make both yourself and me miserable. Think with what a heavy heart I should leave you; and that we shall often have to be separated you are well aware."

"I know it, Harry; but I do not know how I shall bear it."

"Oh, my Rose! do not disappoint my hopes of a true help-meet in you. You used to speak in a very different tone. Where is your missionary spirit?"

"Why, Harry, I never thought of being a missionary, or anything else, without you. And now, here it is nearly eight weeks since I saw you. When I am left

alone among strangers, as you say I must be"—— tears again prevented the finishing of the sentence.

"Rose, rouse yourself, my love. I feel sure now that you are not well. What is it, dearest? Are you really sick?"

But Rose could say nothing. She shook her head, however, in answer to the question, and Harry resumed: "It will of course be painful to both of us to be separated; but if we deny ourselves earthly comforts, in the service of our Lord, he will give us such a measure of his presence and favor as will more than make up any loss we sustain. And, you know, by constant and useful employment of mind, unpleasant thoughts will be excluded."

Rose had still nothing to reply to such arguments, but she smiled upon him through her tears, and he tried to take that as acquiescence.

"But you have not asked what brought me to Baltimore at this unusual time?"

"No, indeed! I did not suppose that was necessary. If you wished to see me as much as I wished to see you, that was enough."

"Not enough, my dear Rose, if duty had called me elsewhere. Was it?"

"But your duty to me when I am so lonely, calls you here," said Rose, assuming a little of the imperious beauty so natural to her, and which her late interview with Mr. Eldridge had revived.

"Oh, Rose, I cannot laugh with you to-night, for I have sad news from our dear Willie. My mother writes me that he is very sick. He is persuaded that he has not long to stay with us."

Rose started, and looked fixedly in his face an instant, then as suddenly turned away, for she would not have

him read the thoughts that rushed madly through her brain. Supposing that her quick motion was prompted by a far different feeling, he added soothingly:

"I hope he is not as ill, dearest, as he thinks himself."

By this time she could control herself sufficiently to utter some commonplace words of regret, but her voice faltered; neither could she yet meet his eye. Harry still ascribing her emotion to tenderness for Willie, ventured to say that he should take the stage in the morning for Hunter's Lodge.

"To-morrow!" she exclaimed. "No, indeed, I will not consent to it."

The style of this speech was so different from anything Harry was accustomed to, that he could only suppose it was intended for sport; but feeling too sad for anything of that kind, he replied:

"Dearest Rose, do not jest now, the occasion is too mournful."

"I am far from jesting, Harry. I am very sorry for poor dear Willie, I am sure; but one day can make no difference to him, and it will a great deal to me. I have so much to talk to you about, I am sure you cannot refuse."

"Rose, say no more, I entreat. You certainly forget the occasion of my going, and do not know how much pain you give me. Under no ordinary circumstances could I consent to leave you, but this is a case that admits of no delay."

"Then you will not stay with me one day?"

"It is impossible for me to do so, dear Rose," and he drew her towards him with a grave smile. But she started from his side, saying:

"Well, I have been mistaken, then. I am sorry you do not love me as much as you do Willie."

For one moment the blood rushed tumultuously to Harry's face, and he sat with compressed lips, struggling against the tide of grieved and indignant feeling that deprived him of the power of utterance. But he almost immediately recovered himself. The flush receded. His lips resumed their bland and wavy lines. He rose, and following her to her distant seat, took her hand with a gentle but steady force, that she well understood. He spoke in tones of deep feeling of the ties that bound them to each other for weal or woe; of the certainty that neither could enjoy nor suffer alone as long as those ties existed. He touched tenderly upon the precarious state of Willie's health, and upon the great desire he had expressed to see him once more; of the danger that it might even now be too late. And then affectionately reminded her of the solemn vows she had so recently assumed. His manner was so serious, and at the same time so full of feeling, that the proud spirit was completely subdued. Tear after tear gathered in her large eyes, and rolled down her cheeks while he spoke; and long before he ceased, they were falling upon that bosom where she was still cherished with a devotion which her light and frivolous nature was incapable of estimating. How far the recollection of Willie's illness, and the effect upon her future interests if he should not recover, might have assisted to soften her displeasure, we will not inquire; but she was now ready to make any concession, any promise that might heal the wound her petulance had caused. Harry was comforted for the time, and tried to persuade himself that these were but the faults of injudicious training, and that like the mists of the

morning, exhaled by the rising sun, they would vanish in the brighter beams of a matured Christianity.

Though Rose knew the early hour at which Harry must be ready for the stage, and that he had several letters to write, she urged his stay from moment to moment, till, when he did tear himself from her blandishments, he had barely time to finish his letters, and fall into an uncomfortable doze, before the summons came to rise and commence his gloomy night ride.

Far more gloomy did that ride prove to the young traveller than any he had ever before undertaken, for he had not only the dread of finding his beloved Willie near death, but he was, in spite of himself, haunted by the appalling idea that Rose was not what he had fondly believed religion would make her. The night was dark and snowy. There were but two passengers beside himself, neither of whom, to his great satisfaction, was disposed to talk; for uncomfortable as were his own meditations, he preferred to encounter them unimpeded, face to face, rather than as forcing themselves in between observations and questions which must be attended to without the slightest interest in their subjects.

For the first time in his life, Harry was about to meet his mother with a feeling of not unmixed pleasure. He knew she had a singular power of looking right into his heart, and finding out what was there almost before he was aware of it himself. Now he had a kind of consciousness of something there which he did not wish her to see. He was not even sure what it was, or that there really was anything. If there was, her eye would detect it, and when she thought best, bring it to the light. Never before had he sought to avoid that scrutiny. In vain did he summon before his mind all the scenes and

circumstances of Hunter's Lodge, real or imaginary, as if to exclude other and less welcome themes. All would not do; the events of the last evening would appear at the bar of his judgment and court a trial. Long he studied over the unaccountable tempest of grief in which he found Rose plunged, as he entered the parlor, but could find no sufficient clue to the mystery. Then her strange coldness and indifference about Willie, after the uncommon emotion she manifested at first hearing of his danger. Often did he chide these unwelcome intruders, and bid them back, but as often would they return, till, as he approached the neighborhood of the Lodge, everything gave way to the longing desire to reach it, and learn the true state of his dear Willie.

CHAPTER XV.

A SAD VISIT HOME.

"Oh my soul's friend, thou'rt with me!—now I dread
No more the agony;—my fainting head
Shall find a pillow on thy faithful breast.
So loved, so cared for, I can surely rest,
And wait in peace whate'er our Father's will
May call our trusting spirits to fulfill."

A LONG and wearisome ride, unusually protracted by the state of the roads, brought Harry at last to the sight of Woodbury, and there as in old college days was faithful Joe waiting for him. His impatience could no longer brook the tedious dragging up the hill. Giving a sign to Joe, he sprang out of the stage, and was far in advance of the heavy vehicle when they met. He could only say, "Joe, how is he?"

"Ah, Mars Harry, he is very bad," was Joe's scarce audible reply, as he received the silent but expressive greeting. Between his joy at seeing one young master, and his sorrow for the danger of the other, it was as much as the kind-hearted fellow could do to keep from crying outright. A few more questions as the two old playmates, side by side, toiled up the wet and slippery hill, put Harry in possession of the facts of the case, as far as Joe could impart them. Willie's cough had been getting more and more distressing for the last few weeks, accompanied by an increase of pain and fever, till for several days he had become so reduced as to keep his bed.

"Oh, Mars Harry, I never was so glad to see you before. He talks about you, night and day, and if anything can do him good, it will be the sight of you, sir."

Harry could say little in reply; but Joe knew the reason, and was satisfied. They were soon in the saddle, and as the road between the village and the Lodge was in tolerable condition, they pressed on with better speed, and in almost total silence.

Harry found his grandfather on the lookout for him. Indeed, he could neither bear to remain by the bedside of his son, nor to absent himself entirely from it. He spent the time wandering about, from room to room, with drooping head, his hands locked behind him, communing with his sad heart in heavy sighs and groans.

The change in his appearance was greater than the time since Harry had last seen him would justify. His hair was nearly white, and his step more feeble and unsteady, so that his family scarcely considered it safe for him to walk about alone. But with his natural independence he would not receive assistance. In short, it seemed evident that he was following his darling son, slowly but surely to the grave. He embraced his grandson with his accustomed warmth of affection, saying in a broken voice, "Harry, my son, you have come to see the last of the Hunters."

Harry had no words wherewith to comfort the poor broken heart; but he tenderly supported the tottering form of his parent, as he willingly leant upon him, on their way to the library. He led him to his chair, and as he turned away his mother came in. A long embrace, and "My precious mother"—"My own dear Harry," was all, till Harry asked, "What do you think of him?"

By this time Mrs. Bradford had regained her usual self-possession, and replied: "The doctor thinks there is an abscess that must break soon. If he survives that, he may be better again. If his strength is not sufficient to"—

She said no more, and Harry asked no more. He felt that he knew all that could be known, and silently committed the object of their deep love and solicitude to the care of the great Physician, who alone could sustain him through the dreaded crisis.

As Willie was already apprised of his arrival, Harry accompanied his mother up-stairs. For one moment the hectic flush, with the corresponding glitter of the eye—the beaming smile—the hands stretched forth in welcome, prevented Harry from perceiving the great change that disease had made, but when he withdrew from those clasping arms, the brightness had faded. Willie was weeping from mere physical debility; the excess of his joy was more than the wasted energies could bear. But it did not last long. It was Harry's hand that he held, Harry's voice that soothed him, and he soon looked up, smiling with tremulous lips, and said:

"Harry, you were never as weak as I am, or you would understand why I shed these tears, while my heart is full of joy."

"Human nature is always weak enough for us to understand it, dear Willie. But I am afraid you will exhaust yourself. Now you must keep quite still. I will sit by you while you rest."

Willie passively assented, for his expectation of Harry's coming had kept him in a state of excitement all day. He now lay, or rather sat, for he could not breathe in a recumbent posture, leaning against the pil-

lows, with his hand clasped in that of Harry, now and then opening his eyes and smiling upon him with an expression of perfect satisfaction, though to others his labored breathing was painfully apparent.

After a while he looked up, and in a low voice said, "Harry."

"Well, little uncle, what can I do for you?"

"Nothing, dear Brother Harry; but I thank you for calling me by that name. It brings up so many sweet thoughts of old times, of our woodland excursions in the little wagon with Pete and Joe. Oh, Harry, you do not know, you are away so much, what fine fellows they have grown. I believe they are both true Christians; and more trusty, devoted servants, no one was ever blessed with."

"But are you not talking too much?"

"I think not. I have been saving my voice all day on purpose to talk to you. I love to go back to those pleasant times. What new life you brought for me when you came—and my blessed sister—what a mother she has been to me. Oh, Harry, my heart is so full of love to you all. I must tell you how happy I am—happy in that perfect love that casteth out all fear. Death has not for a long time had any terrors for me, and now he seems a delightful messenger to carry me home to my Father's house. Yet I am not impatient to go, for whether I live or die, I am his. My life is hid with Christ in God."

"I do rejoice for and with you, my dear Willie," said Harry, deeply affected; "but I confess, I cannot yet feel perfectly willing to let you go."

"Oh, do not say so. I can be of no further use here; and now that dear Rose is a Christian and yours, you

can do without me. I should like to see the sweet girl. Tell her I left my love for her, and a charge to make my dear Harry happy."

"But, Willie, I have too much hope in my nature to give you up yet. Doctor Torrence says you may rally again."

"I know he does. But it is so uncertain that I prefer to dwell on the greater probability of my being called away without a moment's warning."

Observing a sudden contraction of his features, Harry asked tenderly if he suffered much pain.

"Sometimes I do, in my body," he replied, regaining his usual placid expression; "but the happiness of my soul makes it seem like nothing. And then you can have no idea how kind everybody is. Even the servants seem to feel as if they could never do enough for me. Israel, Primus, Pete and Joe, stay with me at night by turns. They lift me and wait upon me, as gently as if I was a baby. I need say nothing of Sister Sophy, you and I have grown up together under her benign influences. But my dear father—oh, Harry, there is a great change in him. Sometimes I cannot but hope he is a Christian; he seems so submissive, and though he does not find that fullness of consolation that the Gospel offers, I do believe he will after I am gone. As long as there is a poor wreck of a Hunter left, he leans upon the broken reed. No wonder he feels the sharp points. But I was going to say, he is so affectionate, so anxious for my comfort! If he had the strength, I am sure he would not let any one else do anything for me."

"Willie, do his views of the plan of salvation seem to be clear?"

"Sometimes they do, but again his mind seems to get

entangled among his earthly sorrows, and all is confusion and darkness. Still I have confidence that the light is increasing, and will eventually prevail."

Willie had thus far been able to speak with tolerable ease, by resting frequently between his sentences. But now the expression of pain returned, and a long paroxysm of coughing prevented any further conversation for the time. Harry and his mother watched beside his weary pillow, in the deepening twilight, but it was long before he could again breathe with anything like ease. Then conversation in his room was out of the question, for even the faintest whisper caught his morbidly sensitive ear, and he would try at least to listen.

Harry begged to stay with him during the night, but his mother would not consent. She said, Willie would not be as likely to sleep. He preferred to have no one with him in the night but the servants. She was in the next room, and if there was the least necessity for it, she would call him. With this arrangement he had to be content.

Morning found Willie suffering from pain and fever, unable to bear any excitement, and Harry reproached himself for allowing him to talk so much the previous evening; but the doctor said he did not ascribe it to anything but the natural progress of the disease. His cough came on earlier in the day, and left him more feverish and restless. Mrs. Bradford and Harry absented themselves from the room only for the needful exercise in the fresh air. The family from Gaywood came frequently to inquire and to offer any assistance that might be needed; but as no one was admitted except the necessary attendants, only Virginia was permitted to see him.

Mr. and Mrs. Preston were absent in a remote part of the district. Mr. Stuart was always welcome. The attachment between him and Willie had become a source of great happiness to both. Col. Hunter frequently came in, took his wasted hand, and leaned over him with expressions of affecting tenderness for a while,; but when the swelling grief would have way, and tears could no longer be restrained, he hurried away till he could regain his habitual sad self-control.

CHAPTER XVI.

OLD NURSE'S VISION.

"'Tis the sunset of life gives me mystical lore,
And coming events cast their shadows before."

CAMPBELL.

THE second morning after Harry's arrival, as he sat watching the uneasy slumbers of the dear invalid, Mrs. Bradford took her usual walk to the cabin of old Letty, who was now confined to the fireside by a severe attack of rheumatism. These daily visits were the chief consolation of her grief, that she could not get up to the house and see her "darling chile, Mars Willie, before he received the call to *go over*," which, in her poetical language, indicated crossing the Jordan of Death.

This time Mrs. Bradford's stay was more brief than usual. Sitting only long enough to impart the sad news of Willie's increased suffering, she left, with a promise of sending Harry to her, and hurried back.

In obedience to directions given before she left home, Fleetfoot stood ready for his master's use, arching his glossy neck and greeting her approach by a low whinny of recognition. A kind word, and a pat or two, gave evident satisfaction as she passed on. She had frequently used him herself during Harry's absence, and they had consequently become great friends.

Willie was awake. His radiant smile was still unquenched, and that, with Harry's encircling arm, welcomed her return, but no word was spoken, till, as she

pushed back the heavy waves of hair from the brow that turned lovingly towards her, and pressed her lips upon its marble whiteness, she whispered:

"Fleetfoot is ready for you, my son, and I have told mam' Letty that you will see her on your way home."

Harry knew that remonstrance would be vain, for it was one of his mother's fixed principles that those who were nursing the sick, should take every precaution to preserve their own vigor of body and mind, not only for their own safety, but as an important qualification for usefulness to the patient.

Returning the fond caress of his mother, Harry rose, but still lingered, and bending over the pillow, said to Willie:

"I feel very much like rebellion, little uncle, won't you second me in carrying it out?"

"No, dear Harry, I wish you to go," was the faint but earnest reply, brightened by the pleasant look that never failed to respond to that title. He went, and in spite of his reluctance to set forth, enjoyed the brace of the keen mountain breeze, as Fleetfoot, justifying his name, bore him along the road to Gaywood.

There he was received with all the warmth of affection that would have been bestowed upon a dear son, in which light indeed Mrs. Carter was most happy to regard him. But no hospitable entreaties could induce him to tarry, save to give the anxious hearts the particulars of Willie's condition. When he took leave, he turned not out of the direct route to the Lodge, except to dash up the avenue to another friendly mansion, where he saw one of the family at the door. As soon as he had shaken hands, and answered kind inquiries, he again hastened on his way to the humble home of old nurse Letty.

That affectionate creature looked upon him as one of her own nurslings, scarcely seeming to remember that the nest which had cherished his babyhood was far away from her fostering care. Was he not the child of her own loved and revered Miss Sophy? Was he not the future head of that house, in whose glories she reposed her age, even as she had sunned her youth? Scarcely could Mrs. Rodney herself more deeply participate in all that touched the weal or woe of that family which she had espoused as her own when she came, a mere child, in the bridal train of her first lamented mistress.

While she sat listening for the step of her expected visitor, shadowy forms of the past, tinged with the fantastic enthusiasm of her class, began to glow in her brain, and mingle with the sadder hues of more recent events, rousing her excited mind from the creeping apathy of age; and when Harry's light tap at her door preceded his entrance, she struggled to rise from her chair, in order to bestow upon him a reception worthy of his prospective position.

Seeing her intention, he hastened forward to prevent it, but she was already on her feet, with raised hands and eyes, pouring her benedictions upon his head.

"De Lord bless you, my dear Mars Harry, and cause his face to shine upon you, and make you a blessing to a world of sinners, and to dese people he's calling you to rule over."

Then, as she looked in his face, the high tone of her feelings seemed to be lost in a gush of tenderness for the child of her love, and she added, sinking back into her seat, "Ah, my chile, de sight of you is a blessing to you ole mammy, any how."

For a few moments she covered her face with her

apron and wept. Then, wiping her eyes, she continued in the fondling style of past days, "Now, honey, bring de chair—my Miss Sophy's chair—and sit down here, where my ole eyes can see you; dey getting blind mighty fast, but never mind, dey last long as I be here to want 'em. Dat's right, put it close to me. None of de chilern been in, or I would have made 'em set it out ready for you."

Long the faithful creature gazed with an expression half tear, half smile, upon her young master, as she now more than ever considered him. "I can see you yet, Mars Harry, and I glad of that—my eyes right dim-like, but dere's de same bright eyes—de same white teeth, and better still, dere's the same kind heart inside of all. Oh, I know it, a true Christian heart it is, dat will watch over de poor souls and bodies of my people." Then as if the feeling could be no longer held in check, she burst forth, "Oh, Mars Harry! Mars Harry! you won't let any of them be sold—you won't separate husband and wife, and children." Then softening her excited voice, "I know you won't, honey, I know you won't; but some of them can't help getting scared sometimes. Tell me for their sakes, that when my blessed Mars Willie 's gone over, you won't sell de people."

Harry was deeply moved. Solemnly and impressively he replied, "Dear mammy, make yourself easy on that subject, and comfort all who may feel troubled about it. If they should ever come into my possession, I will never part with one of them, unless it is his own wish."

"De Lord be praised for putting it into your heart. And didn't I know it? But it does my ole heart good to hear ye say it, and I'll tell the children too."

"But, mammy, the doctor still hopes your Master

Willie may get over this attack, and I cannot but believe he will; so do not say any more on the subject. Let us trust the mercy of God to restore him. He will always be a kind master to you."

"Ah, honey, dey all know dat; but, somehow, Mars Willie too tender-like to have de worry of all dese people, and don't ye see how Mars Davy's wasting all away?"

Harry sighed as he answered, "Yes, it cannot be denied that grandfather is very much broken since I was last at home. If it should be necessary for his comfort and Willie's, I am willing to come home. I have health and strength that shall be freely devoted to their service. But, in the meantime, till it is necessary, let us commit it in faith to Him who can best manage it. It is a subject that I dislike to think of, and could only allow it to be mentioned because I wish the servants to feel easy, and to understand that as far as I can prevent it, not one of them shall be sold."

"And dere's not one among 'em but what 'ill thank and bless you for de word wid dere last breath, Mars Harry."

"And now, mammy, we will talk of something else."

"So we will, honey—so we will. And you musn't mind you' ole mammy. I nursed your mother—de Lord bless her for one of de best. Yere like one of my own, Mars Harry, and now here you is a preacher of de blessed Gospel, and I raly believe taller dan Mars Davy hisself; but he don't hold hisself up so grand-like as he used to, and cause enough he has, poor man, wid all his sorrows." And then again her mind wandering away among the visions of the past, she sat rocking herself back and forward, groaning and sighing.

Harry spoke some words of consolation, which caused her to look up, and begin again, though not with the air of satisfaction that might have been expected, "And dey tell me, honey, you's thinking of getting married."

"Yes, mammy, but not for a long time. Not for two years at least, so you will have time to get well and strong to pay your respects to the bride when she comes to the Lodge."

"Ah, honey, dis ole head be laid to rest under de green grass before dat. But I 'spects, de Lord willing, always to look down and see the mistress of Hunter's Lodge, when she's brought home. A great day it was, when my own beautiful mistress was brought home a bride. I was no more'n a child den; but a proud and a happy child I was. Mars Harry, I sees great sights, sometimes, more'n I tell everybody, while I sits here alone; when dis worl' begins to grow dark, an' sort o' fade away, and de ole times comes up again. I's alway wandering 'bout de great rooms up to de house. Sometimes dere's great funerals, and all de company in black, looking so sorrowful, and crying. Den other times, I sees so many ladies and gentlemen all dressed so fine, sweeping and rustling dere silks through de rooms, and dere's music and feasting. Mars Davy and my Miss Sophy walking about, side by side, and smiling upon everybody. Den all of a sudden it's you, Mars Harry, and your bride. Ah, she's a sweet gentle creature—de chosen of de Lord she is, from a child, so modest-like, with the pretty blushes coming and going, while you looking down in her face. Seems as if all de lights keep shining right on her head, making it look like gold, only darker."

Harry had frequently known the old negroes in their dotage to fall into this kind of superstitious dreaming,

but it pained him to see such marks of decline in the once clear and common sense mind of the old nurse. He interrupted her.

"But, mammy, these are only dreams. It is perhaps well enough if you can solace your lonely hours with them. They may be a comfort to you, but do not mistake them for realities."

"Mars Harry," said the old woman, with some little displeasure at being thus brought back from her flight, "You's young, sir—wait till you old like me—den de Lord may show you great things. Doesn't de good book tell 'bout de Lord teaching his people in dreams and visions?"

"Not since he has given us his written word—the Bible. There we find all needful information in regard to the future."

Harry paused, observing that his old friend looked quite cast down by his light estimate of her visions, but considering them perfectly harmless, he looked smilingly in her face, and continued:

"Mammy, you must put on your spectacles, and look more carefully at my bride the next time you see her. Do you not remember that Rose has black hair?"

"Surely, my child, surely I remember—black as de crow's wing. She's mighty pretty, Mars Harry, I know, but I never sees her 'mong de company up to de house."

"Still upon this strange fancy," thought Harry; but not appearing to understand her, he remarked in answer, "She has been at home very little since last summer. Did she not come to see you then?"

"Oh, yes, honey, she came to see ole mammy right often. She is a mighty lively, pretty young lady."

"But she is something better than that now, mammy. She is a Christian."

"So I hear; and de good Lord be praised for it. I was mighty glad when I heard 'bout it. Miss Sophy, and Mars Willie, and Mars Stuart, too, dey all come and tell me. But, after all, Mars Harry, she's not de one I sees."

This was too plain to be misunderstood. Harry was vexed, and still more vexed with himself for being vexed at the pertinacity of an old woman in favor of the visions unconsciously blended with waking thoughts; but finding all efforts fruitless to restore her usual bright, chatty mood, he left her. It was not till after several visits to the cabin that the impression seemed entirely effaced from either mind, and the usual easy, affectionate intercourse reëstablished.

CHAPTER XVII.

LIFE OR DEATH.

"One sweetly solemn thought comes to me o'er and o'er,
I'm nearer home to-day than I've ever been before;
Nearer my Father's house, where the many mansions be,
Nearer the great white throne, nearer the jasper sea.

"Nearer the bound of life, where we lay our burdens down,
Nearer leaving the cross, nearer wearing the crown;
Closer, closer my steps come to the dark abysm,
Closer Death to my lips presses the awful chrism."

On one occasion, when Willie's cough seemed peculiarly distressing, Col. Hunter turned away and left the room in great agitation. As soon as the paroxysm subsided, Harry followed him to the library. Opening the door he heard a low voice uttering words of tender sympathy. They proceeded from the lips of a female, who was bending over the grief-stricken father. Could it be Susan? The form was taller, more womanly. Her face was turned away from him, but there was something in the tone, something in the golden gloss of the soft, brown hair, that was familiar. He knew that Susan was at Forestdale. The question was scarcely formed in his mind, before it was answered, for she had recognized his voice giving some directions to a servant as he entered, and said, still addressing Col. Hunter, "And here is Harry, come to comfort you." Then turning towards him with sparkling eyes and heightened color, she held out her hand.

Harry took it with no less animated pleasure. "Why, Susan," he exclaimed, "I am delighted to see you; and how well you look." But while he spoke, the color was gone, and she turned again to Col. Hunter.

Harry felt rebuked that he had for a moment forgotten the grief he came to console. "Dear grandfather," he said, as he took the vacant seat on the other side, "Willie has ceased coughing now, and is breathing more easily. Come up-stairs and see how placid he is."

"Not now, my son; I could not command myself. Oh, Susan, this is a dark day for us."

"Yes, dear sir, it looks so now, but we must not despond. Doctor Torrence spoke this morning, at our house, of his hope that Willie may be better again."

"Ah, my dear, if that should even be the case, of which I see no probable chance, it could only be a life of prolonged suffering. So, perhaps, it would be better that he should sleep beside the rest of his family. I must try to think so."

"But, grandfather, you do not believe that Willie, our immortal Willie, will sleep there, do you?" said Harry, looking in his face with a smile so radiant with holy joy that the sad heart felt its glow.

"No, no, my dear boy. Willie will not be there, but where will he be? Shall I ever see him again? My mind is weak, and cannot rise from its broken hopes. Talk to me, my dear children, of that bright world, and help me to realize that my lost ones are there. Sophy and Willie—oh, what blessed children they are to me,—and you, too, my own Harry, all assure me that they still live—that I may hope to meet them again. Sometimes I can almost take the gracious promises that you point out to me to my heart, and lay them as a healing balm

upon my wounds. But then some power beyond my control hurries my thoughts away to the graveyard, where I can only see them prisoned forever in silence and in gloom."

Susan had never heard expressions of this kind from Col. Hunter. When she went with her mother to Staunton, he was comparatively vigorous in mind and body. Though evidently oppressed by melancholy, it never sought relief in words. Except on rare occasions with his own children, it was borne in silence accompanied by a dignified courtesy that to many appeared more like *hauteur* than self-control. But mind and body were now giving way under the pressure of disease and sorrow.

Susan wept while she listened to the plaintive words of the bereaved father, leaving Harry to present the cheering promises of the Gospel to the weary and heavy laden heart. Even those precious truths, so aptly and tenderly enforced, failed to reach her. She could only hear the voice, whose rich and varied tones had so often thrilled her wondering heart, when scarcely more than a child. One moment earthly affection triumphed, and she listened, as to a strain of music, heard in childhood and treasured in memory's deepest cell. The words, "happy Rose!" spoken so emphatically in her heart, as almost to startle her into the belief that they were heard by others, recalled her to herself. Forcibly withdrawing her thoughts from the dangerous subject, she was soon able to join in the conversation, and to find pleasure in seeing the gloomy shadow of temporal death giving place, in some degree, before the word of Him who has abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light.

A smile full of love and peace was all the greeting Willie could bestow upon Susan. Harry had prepared her to see a great change in his appearance, but she had to combat her recently excited sensibility before she was prepared to take her place as one of his most accepted nurses.

A letter arrived from Rose at this time, but Willie's increasing illness left Harry barely time to read it. Nothing was said beyond the bare mention of its reception. But Harry felt better able in consequence to meet the approaching trial.

Varied as were the visions of past, present and future that agitated the bosoms of this little circle, all were held in abeyance to the one absorbing idea of Willie's suffering and danger. The disease was making steady progress. On the evening after Susan joined them, Mrs. Bradford and Harry, seeing every indication that the crisis must be near, by a tacit understanding, dismissed the usual attendants, and took their station by the bed of the sufferer for the night. The issue of the contest for life or death was becoming hourly more uncertain. Few words were spoken during that sad vigil, but many a prayer went up from each heart.

Towards morning, an effort to cough brought on the dreaded strife. Long it seemed as if each gasp must be the last. Harry supported him in his arms, while Mrs. Bradford wiped the cold, heavy drops of agony from his brow, both in breathless suspense, watching the fearful conflict. But they watched not alone. There was another eye that neither slumbered nor slept. One in whose sight the death of his saints is precious, but who in tender compassion to these loving hearts, put aside his own

claim, and spared the life so closely interwoven with that of his children.

The crisis was over and Willie still lived, though for some time it seemed as if he had ceased to breathe. It was the reaction of extreme exhaustion. So completely was strength gone that he lay as if in a swoon. But when his sister put a restoring draught to his lips, he swallowed a few drops, opened his languid eyes, and faintly smiled. Then closing them again, he fell into a peaceful sleep.

From that time, though weak as helpless infancy, he began to improve. His breathing became easy, he had neither fever nor pain, and his cough gradually left him. The next day Harry handed Rose's letter to his mother. She had what might be called a gift for letter-writing. Even at school, though inferior in other branches of composition, she had won the prize from all competitors in this. Praise had stimulated her to effort, and habit had made it easy. To a person not biased by partiality, there might have appeared something artificial in her pretty and brilliant expressions; but to Harry, under his present enchantment, they were the perfection of grace and simplicity. Letters had formed the chief part of their intercourse since their engagement, and in that light she appeared all that she should have been. The present specimen was in her happiest style.

She alluded to the circumstances of their late interview, adroitly managing to make all appear as the result of her extreme loneliness during his absence. She drew a touching picture of her unhappy situation, surrounded only by those who could not sympathize in her present views, and who sought perseveringly to draw her again

into the vortex of fashionable vanities; spoke with charming humility of her inexperience, and her great need of some one to direct her steps that possessed more knowledge and strength of Christian character than she did. She had attended a love-feast, and described in appropriate language its various interesting particulars. She sent most affectionate and beautifully-expressed messages to all, especially to her dear Willie, entreating pathetically to hear, as soon as possible, how Harry found him.

Strange to say, it did not occur to her, for a moment, that what she expressed was not the true state of her feelings. For the time being it possibly was, but hers was unhappily one of those indefinite minds, in which the true and the false, the real and the fictitious, are so inextricably blended that the distinctive boundaries are no longer to be traced.

In a few days, as Willie became the object of less intense solicitude, conversation was permitted in his room. Too weak to engage in it himself, his speaking countenance, and occasional questions, still attested the interest he took in every word. All listened with deep emotion to Harry's account of the various scenes of the camp-meeting, especially such as related to Rose. Harry dwelt with peculiar comfort upon every minute incident, as if the pleasure so plainly evinced by his auditors was an additional confirmation of his own fond hope that all was right, where the faintest and most transient suspicion of wrong gave pain so exquisite.

Willie alone listened with unmixed delight to the narrative. His pure and artless mind gave its own coloring to the character of those he loved, and he now rejoiced over Rose as a distinguished trophy of redeem-

ing grace. In Mrs. Bradford, joy was solemnized by the momentous interests at stake; no less than the future happiness and usefulness of that being, in whom her own existence was so completely merged, and whom she had so unselfishly dedicated to the service of his divine Master. Susan neither felt the apprehensions that haunted the anxious bosom of the mother, for she was young and sanguine, nor the undoubting confidence of Willie, for she had a more intimate acquaintance with the character and disposition of her captivating friend. If for a moment faith and joy smiled through a tear, other thoughts would arise to mar their brightness; and then—bitterest of all—came the pang of self-condemnation, that she should thus judge her old playmate and Harry's choice.

The frequent changes of her color and expression were noticed by Mrs. Bradford alone with an understanding eye. She thought she had long read that ingenuous heart; but whatever her discoveries might have been, they were closely shut up in her own bosom, and she tried to have no wishes of her own, leaving all in submission to Him who will cause all things to work together for good to them that love him.

She felt sure that something still lingered in Harry's heart that he had not opened to her inspection. That it was in some way connected with Rose she was equally sure; but beyond that all was mere conjecture, and she determined to wait till he was ready to make it known, certain that confidence would come in due time.

It was decided that Susan should go to Baltimore with Harry when he returned. She would have chosen a different arrangement, but as no other opportunity offered

she could give no reason for declining, and returned to Forestdale to make the needful preparations. Harry was delighted, not only that he should have pleasant company, but he could not disguise from himself that hers was just the influence needed by Rose.

Even during the few days of their renewed intercourse, the Christian sweetness of her character, her entire freedom from selfishness, the unobtrusive thoughtfulness of the comfort of others, that marked her every word and action, frequently struck his attention. The great affection that existed between her and his mother, too, gave him a high degree of pleasure, yet mingled with an anxiety almost amounting to jealousy, lest Rose should not be thus loved.

He could not but see, that in religious knowledge as well as experience, Susan was far in advance of Rose; but that was easily and satisfactorily accounted for in the fact that the one had from childhood been in the school of Christ, while the other had but just entered it. She had much to learn, but with her ardent temperament, he persuaded himself that when subdued and directed by experience, she would make the more energetic and effective character of the two. There was, to be sure, something very winning in the gentle softness of Susan; but he questioned whether that very softness might not tend to weaken the character.

Oh, the blinding, bewildering spell of love, even in the most sensible and manly mind! Humiliating truth! But truth it is. Who has not seen the strongest intellect, the soundest judgment, the purest principle, rendered powerless before the magic of woman's

tenderness? It has often been remarked that the finest masculine minds generally seek to mate with those of decided inferiority. Still, it must be conceded in Harry's excuse, that various other influences conspired to draw him into the snare.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.

"Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid, cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy name; through Christ our Lord. Amen."—COMMON PRAYER.

As soon as Willie gained strength enough to talk, he seemed unwilling to lose a moment of Harry's company. He thirsted for an understanding heart to know the word of God. His Bible always lay beside him, when it was not in his hand, and he was ever ready with some passage of doctrine or practice for Harry to elucidate. As long as he had been able to walk or ride about, he had spent part of every day in Mr. Stuart's study, or with Mr. Preston in his, reading, or discussing some holy theme. His craving for knowledge of divine things was not to be appeased, and he had begun seriously to meditate commencing the study of the Hebrew language, when his health so completely gave way, that again, with bitter regret, he renounced the cherished idea.

One bright frosty morning, as Harry came in from a ride, all glowing with health and exercise, he found Willie lying on his favorite sofa. This was one step towards convalescence that cheered all hearts, as well as his own Mrs. Bradford had some occupation that called her away for a time, and she left Harry to minister to the few wants of the beloved invalid.

Willie was turning over the leaves of his Bible with an air of anxious inquiry, while several books of reference lay near him. He looked up, smiling, and pushed away the heavy volumes as Harry took a seat near him.

"You see I have returned to life," he said. "I thought I had laid aside these unsatisfactory streams of knowledge to drink at the fountain-head. But it was not to be so, and I am yet here, your scholar, to-day. I have so much to talk with you about—but how cold your hands are, and your face too! You must warm them before you attend to me."

"I am too cold to touch you, dear Willie, but not enough so to hurt me. The wind is very kéen, but the air of the room will warm me."

"You must have had a long ride."

"Only to Gaywood, to bid good bye. Now I am not going to leave you till I go to Baltimore."

"And you have to take that long stage ride in such severe weather. I am afraid you will suffer."

Harry laughed. "Oh, that is nothing to traversing the ridge of the mountains on Long Run circuit, in the face of a northeaster, and on horseback too. I have lived through that, so you need not be troubled about me now, little uncle. Circuit riders have all sorts of wrappings. I am only afraid I shall get spoiled and good for nothing, my riding is so easy now."

"Harry, perhaps my life is spared that I may see you one year on this circuit. Oh, how happy it would make us all!"

"And I should be one of that dear *all*, sometimes. But we must not allow ourselves to have wishes on selfish subjects, if we can help it. It is better to trust the Lord. But what are you doing with all these great

books? You do not look strong enough to lift them."

"I believe I am not yet, but time is precious. You will leave us in two days now, and I want you to tell me what you think on the subject of Christian perfection."

"Why, my dear Willie, you look at me as if you expected to receive all the knowledge and wisdom of the schools from my lips. I assure you that, although my thoughts would fill volumes, I am by no means prepared to teach others on so weighty a subject. I believe you have far more practical knowledge about it than I have."

"Oh, no, Harry, that is a great mistake. But some pages of those volumes of thought, if you please."

"You should have them, my dear Willie, if they were in a state to be profitable to you. But as it is a doctrine that has divided so many of the greatest minds and holiest hearts that have ever existed, would it not be presumption in a mere tyro like me to have an opinion, unless I could say, 'I speak that I do know, and testify that I have seen.' Like some other great questions in theology, I find enough in the oracles of truth, apparently to justify an opinion on either side of the argument."

"But, Harry, what are we to do with such expressions as, 'Walk before me, and be thou perfect.' 'Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.' 'Perfect love casteth out fear.' 'He that feareth is not made perfect in love,' etc. etc."

"I know of but one thing to do with them, and that is to take them, in humble prayer, to the Spirit who indited them, and ask for his light to discover their meaning. I am not willing to join in rejecting the word *perfection*, as many do, as descriptive of some state to which a Christian is called. The only point is to know what

state it does signify. I not only want to know, but I want to experience all the depths of its meaning in my own soul."

"That is what I want."

"There is one passage that to me conveys more fully the requirements of God, and more of his willingness to perform the gracious work, than any you have quoted."

"Where is it?" cried Willie, eagerly grasping the Bible.

"It is in 1st Thessalonians, last chapter, 23d and 24th verses."

"Oh, yes, I know the words;" and before he could find the place, he began repeating them: "'And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly: and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.'" And again the expressive eyes were fixed on Harry's face, as if to obtain his commentary on the language of the apostle.

"There is enough there, Willie, for a volume of sermons. Whatever the work is, it is to be wrought by the very God of peace. It is to be wrought in us. It is to include our whole being—spirit, soul, and body—and it is to be accomplished before the coming of our Lord, consequently in this life."

Both were silent a little while. Then Harry resumed:

"I came across a passage in one of Mr. Stuart's books a few days ago, that very happily illustrated this most deeply interesting subject. I think it is in my room now." He brought it and read the passage aloud:

"Archbishop Usher was a man of distinguished learning, piety, and diligence. The following circumstance

will show that his humility equalled his other valuable endowments:

"A friend of the archbishop frequently urged him to write his thoughts on *Sanctification*, which at length he engaged to do; but a considerable time elapsing, the performance of his promise was unfortunately claimed. The bishop replied to this purpose: 'I have not written, and yet I cannot charge myself with a breach of promise, for I began to write; but when I came to treat of the new creature which God formeth by his own spirit in every regenerate soul, I found so little of it wrought in myself that I could speak of it only as parrots, or by rote, but without the knowledge of what I might have expressed; and, therefore, I durst not proceed any further upon it.'

"'Upon this his friend stood amazed to hear such an humble confession from so grave, holy, and eminent a person. The bishop then added:

"I must tell you, we do not well understand what sanctification and the new creature are. It is no less than for a man to be brought to an entire resignation of his own will to the will of God; and to live in the offering up of his soul continually in the flames of love, as a whole burnt-offering to Christ; and, oh! how many who profess Christianity are unacquainted experimentally with this work upon their souls!'"

Again the two young men sat silent, meditating upon the words which Harry had read. Willie was first to speak:

"Harry, it is delightful to have the testimony of such men, but I think we can only know what it means, when that faithful Promiser has done it for, and in us."

"Perhaps not then, Willie, for I have oftener seen its

evidences in those who do not dream of possessing it, than in those who do. I do not yet find that we are required to profess it, in order to continue in the blessing. Indeed, I have known melancholy instances where the very spirit of boasting proved its absence."

Willie now lay for a while with closed eyes and clasped hands, seemingly in prayer. Harry gazed upon his lovely countenance, so visibly stamped with the graces that marked his character, and thought he had never met any that seemed more like one of those shining ones who walk with God, than this humble inquirer after all the mind that was in Jesus Christ his Lord.

When he again opened his eyes, Harry said:

"Willie, when you thought yourself about passing into the eternal world, what were your views of your own state in that regard?"

"Oh, Harry, so far as I could think at all, it was only of the fullness and freeness of the atonement, and the love that poured it out upon a poor sinner like me."

"Ah! that is it, Willie. A part of that blessed state must surely be the deepest and humblest sense of our own nothingness, and the infinite sufficiency of the atonement. There can be no state attainable in this life, in which we shall not 'every moment need the merit of His blood.' I often feel when I hear our people in love-feast, or class-meeting, exulting in perfect freedom from sin, that I must remind them, that boasting is excluded by the law of faith, and caution them against losing sight of that blood without which there is no remission of sin. The more I study the subject, the clearer it seems, that infinitely more is offered us in the covenant of grace than we appropriate. Some go so far as to say that the language often used expresses more than is intended; but it seems

to me, we should be cautious how we admit such an idea. Would the Spirit of truth so delude us? Or the contrary, so far as I am capable of judging, our translation often fails to convey the whole strength and power of the original. What is 'the glorious liberty of the sons of God?' What is it 'to be filled with all the fullness of God?' He has declared himself able 'to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think,' and says: 'Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it.' There is a fullness, a magnitude in the promises to which few certainly, if any, have attained. Who has 'come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,' 'having put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness?' In the meantime I am very certain that the more steadily I keep my eye upon that elevated privilege, even dark and obscure as my conception of it is, the more spirituality I enjoy."

"And, Harry, it is a comfort, if we cannot now comprehend all the deep things of God, we can follow on to know the Lord. The higher we ascend the mountain, the more clear and distinct will be our vision of what is at the summit."

"Yes, we have only to 'forget the things that are behind, and press towards the mark for the prize of our high calling?' That it is a high and glorious calling, every page of inspiration assures us.' "

In this way, sometimes with Harry alone, sometimes joined by Mrs. Bradford and Mr. Stuart, Willie sought to improve the last hours of intercourse with Harry, so soon to be again suspended. At times they were able to draw Col. Hunter into their conversations, and then

the subjects were studiously adapted to his state of mind, leading him to turn from the things that perish in the using, to the enduring realities of eternity. But the power of his mind to take hold of new ideas was so weakened, that they generally had to sigh over their imperfect success.

Again Col. Hunter urged Harry to come home and at once enter upon the duties of managing the estate, which, as he said, must soon be his; for, though he could not deny the fact of Willie's present improvement, no human arguments could overcome his fixed belief that father as well as son were moving with unperceived but rapid steps to the shadowy mansions of the dead!

CHAPTER XIX.

PRAYERS AND STRUGGLES.

"I will not pray for human love, to cheer
My onward life; nor will I ask that hope,
With all her bright delusions, may draw near,
And offer me her gilded empty cup.
But I would pray, O God! to taste the Spring
Whose living waters never can be dried.
If to that Fount Divine my soul thou'lt bring,
My thirsty spirit shall be satisfied."

NIGHT WATCHES.

SUSAN, meanwhile, was sitting in the seclusion of her own room at Forestdale, bitterly upbraiding that weakness of heart which had almost lost the victory so hardly won. From the time of Harry's visit to his grandfather in the days of their early childhood, he had been her standard of boy-excellence. Her little heart had beat with pride and pleasure when he used to select her for his companion in their childish sports; and when in summer evening rambles, searching for berries or wild flowers, if he ran to help her in scrambling over the rocks, she did not tell him that habit had made her footing as safe as that of the agile kid, that bounds from rock to rock upon the mountain side, but received his assistance as demurely, and with as maidenly a blush as if, instead of six,

——————"sixteen summer suns had shed
Their lively influence round her head."

When he came again to make his home at Hunter's

Lodge, the loss of his own sweet sister had inclined him more to the society of the gentle girl, and her pleasure was not diminished in finding herself still the chosen playmate. If any puzzling question of right or wrong arose, Harry's decision, with her, was final. None were so patient or so skillful as Harry in unravelling the mysteries of arithmetic or grammar. And while she glided insensibly on towards womanhood, and her judgment of character and Christian principle ripened, the affection that had budded in her artless childhood, strengthened and deepened. Still she dreamed not of danger, supposing that her acknowledged admiration was but the natural tribute to superior merit. Nor even till others sought to secure the first place in her affections did she realize that that place was already and exclusively occupied.

She had been accustomed to an irregular correspondence with Rose when they were separated, but during her mother's decline, perhaps from her inability to respond to the lively tone of her friend, or from her serious thoughts being uncongenial to Rose, several months had elapsed without any communication of that kind. It was not resumed till Rose returned from camp-meeting. Then, in the first fervor of her zeal, she poured out to Susan the tale of her new-found happiness. Truly and thankfully did Susan sympathize, but with it all, there came an unwelcome query. Now that Rose was a Christian, would not Harry gladly accede to the wishes of the two families? Before she had fairly subdued the pain inflicted by that aspect of the case, a second epistle from Rose followed, glowing with all the enthusiasm of boarding-school romance, announcing her engagement, and calling for the congratulations of her dearest Susan, that her long secretly cherished affection was recipro-

cated. With her wonted mixing up of truth with sentimental imagination, her words seemed to convey the idea that Harry had as long been attached to her; but whether he had repressed his feelings because of her known aversion to the life of a Methodist itinerant, or because he could not venture to connect himself with one who made no profession of religion, or because he was hopeless of a return, the ambiguity of her expressions left in darkness.

Prepared as Susan had imagined herself for this last communication, the brave but gentle-hearted girl was for a space completely stunned. When she had asked herself if it might not be so, it was as some distant event for which she would have time to prepare. But no surmisings of others, no vague rumor broke the force of the tidings. The blow came at once, in all its suddenness and certainty, from the most authentic source, leaving no room to doubt its truth.

Not long did she yield. It has been said that

> "He who stems a stream with sand,
> Or fetters flame with flaxen band,
> Has yet a harder task to prove,
> By firm resolve to conquer love."

Had Susan undertaken the task in her own strength, she might well have despaired of victory; but she leaned not on so frail a support. What did she do? She tried to do as a Christian should. She entered into her closet, and when she had shut the door, she spread the case before her Father which seeth in secret. With many tears she confessed what to her tender conscience appeared to be her sin, in allowing her affections to fasten on an earthly object, especially one of so uncertain attainment. Vainly

did self-love plead in extenuation, that she knew not when the subtle foe to her present peace had made his entrance. She would listen to no parley, no palliation of her unwatchfulness. Then, in solemn earnestness, she asked for strength to conquer the least desire to obtain that which belonged to another, and prayed that her heart, withdrawn from all earthly loves and pursuits, might be more than ever consecrated to the service of her Lord. She could say with the apostle, "I can do all things, through Christ which strengtheneth me." Though the battle had often to be renewed—renewed it was, in all the panoply of a Christian soldier, and at last victory was so far gained that with all her heart she could sing the words of the unequalled lyrist, Charles Wesley:

"Come, Saviour, Jesus, from above
Assist me with thy heavenly grace;
Empty my heart of earthly love,
And for thyself prepare the place.

"Oh, let thy sacred presence fill,
And set my longing spirit free,
Which pants to have no other will,
But night and day to feast on thee.

"While in this region here below,
No other good will I pursue;
I'll bid this world of noise and show,
With all its glittering snares, adieu.

"That path with humble speed I'll seek,
In which my Saviour's footsteps shine,
Nor will I hear, nor will I speak
Of any other love than thine.

"Henceforth may no profane delight,
Divide this consecrated soul;
Possess it thou, who hast the right,
As Lord and Master of the whole.

"Nothing on earth do I desire,
But thy pure love within my breast;
This, only this, will I require,
And freely give up all the rest."

Still jealous of herself, lest thought should stray from the path of safety, she marked out a course of study, that with other duties should fill up all her time. By resolutely adhering to this plan, she regained her peace of mind. Happily, she received no more letters from Rose at this period, which made the effort easier to turn her thoughts into other channels. Thus pressing on with steady step in the path of rectitude, she was ready when the time came to return to Aspen Grove, after her promised visit to her brother and sister at Forrestdale.

Harry's coming to Hunter's Lodge was unexpected. It took her unawares, and at first startled her a little; making her shrink at the prospect of an interview. But Mrs. Bradford had often assured her that, both to herself and Willie, her presence was the greatest comfort. With her, principle was practical as well as theoretical, and as she knew that she was expected, she hastened to them as soon as she heard of Willie's increasing illness.

Meeting Col. Hunter coming down-stairs in so much agitation as scarcely to be able to guide his unsteady steps, she instantly forgot her own sorrow in trying to soothe that of another; and gently leading him into the library, was thus engaged when Harry's voice fell upon her ear. That voice, but fuller, richer, carried her with

the irresistible speed of lightning, far, far, back to the day sof light-hearted childhood. The present, with all its pains and discomforts, receded, and the past—the sunny past—was present. Who can limit the power of memory to restore, in one glance, the hours, the days, the years of treasured bliss? In the midsts of these treasures, Susan lived one blessed moment, while she met and returned the cordial reception of her brother Harry of other times. Then the vision, as if touched by the wand of an enchanter, faded. "Like odor fled as soon as shed," it was gone.

Happily for her, the plaintive voice and melancholy forebodings of Col. Hunter furnished an excuse for tears, that in the sudden transition would not be repressed. Their flow was a salutary relief, and gave her strength to control her wayward thoughts during her stay at Hunter's Lodge; but she was glad to return to Forestdale, that in a careful retrospect of the few past days, she might judge of the expediency of returning to Aspen Grove.

After strict and careful self-examination, she decided to go. She had passed the first ordeal with less injury than she feared. There was one more that she dreaded, and then she believed her future course would be comparatively easy. She must see Rose, and listen to the details of her present happiness. Her plans and prospects would be discussed, she doubted not, without restraint or limit. And she must not flinch or tremble, lest her guarded secret should be betrayed. She knew the fountain of her strength was exhaustless, and to that she resorted in full confidence of being sustained.

In the strength of her resolution to overcome every remaining vestige of weakness, and hoping that the

severity of the remedy might work a more radical and thorough cure, she commenced her journey, determined to meet the attentions of her escort in a spirit as frank and unembarrassed as his own; that not one rebellious thought should stray from her control, but all bend to the fact, that it was the future husband of her friend with whom she conversed. She would not wait for Rose to offer her confidence; she would seek it, she would invite it, that in every way, past impressions, insensibly cherished hopes, might be speedily and forever crushed. In no other way could she hope to spend her remaining days peacefully and usefully.

The circumstances of near neighborhood and family intimacy had fostered a degree of affection between herself and Rose, that could not have originated in similarity of character, for that did not exist. Different systems of education, conducted in different places, led them in separate paths, which had continued to diverge till there was scarcely a taste or pursuit in common. Affection itself seemed to be dying for want of congeniality, its natural food. Still enough remained to start into new life when the events of the camp-meeting transpired, and Susan now longed to embrace her friend in the new and endearing relation of sister.

CHAPTER XX.

A TEST OF STRENGTH.

"Ah, fearful! when the fullness of the heart
Shakes with each mighty throb our every nerve,
To feel the double task imposed upon us,
To still the inward tumult, and to school
The eye to look on unconcerned, the lip
To utter accents mild in quiet tone."

NOTWITHSTANDING the strength of purpose with which she entered upon this journey, Susan was not a little fluttered at finding no other passenger in the stage, but herself and Harry. Still true to her noble resolution, she again took refuge in the belief, that the sterner the conflict the surer would be the victory. At first, she felt a constraint and aversion to conversation unusual with her, but all soon vanished before the easy, genial spirit of her companion, from whose breast a weight had been lifted by Willie's almost miraculous restoration. This, with the reception of several of Rose's sweetest letters, had sent him on his brightened path, full of thankfulness and hope. Relieved from present anxiety, he looked forward to a long talk about old times, as much pleased as Susan was troubled at finding they had the stage to themselves.

They talked of Willie, of his endearing character, his ardent piety, his late danger, and the hope, so natural to youth, that he might now be spared to his friends for years. Susan soon found her embarrassment passing off

and leaving only pleasure as her own feelings and opinions met and harmonized with those of Harry.

He spoke of his grandfather with great tenderness, and asked Susan if she did not think there was some ground for hope that the light of the Gospel was breaking into the sorrowful darkness of his mind; and as if led on by some mysterious power, he then alluded to his great dread of the consequences to himself, should father and son both die, and leave the estate to him. He was surprised at himself. He had never spoken so openly to any human being, except his mother. He even doubted the manliness if not the propriety of thus laying open the recesses of his private feelings; but still the expressive features before him, varying with every change of the subject—the sensible and appropriate remarks and questions of his deeply interested auditor, lead him on. He spoke of Rose, and the zeal that urged him forward towards the missionary work, and asked Susan if she thought him wrong in not encouraging this self-devotion.

"Certainly not, Harry," was the reply. "We have not to mark out our own path, but simply to go forward in that indicated by our Master, with unfaltering step, looking for his grace to sustain us if the way be rough."

"Ah, Susan, now I see how I have been led to speak so unreservedly to you. The very spirit of my mother breathes through your lips."

One glowing, sparkling look of thanks, replied to these words, accompanied as they were by such an affectionate smile as might have been bestowed upon that beloved mother. Then something of unusual interest seemed to draw her attention to the naked branches of

the trees they were passing. Harry looked in vain for anything new or strange in their aspect, and then resumed the conversation.

"But, Susan, what am I to do with all these poor negroes, if I am ever their owner?"

"That I should like to know, Harry, as I am responsible for several myself. Suppose you tell me how I can best discharge my responsibility, and in so doing you may obtain light on your own duty.

"Well then—first, how many have you?"

"I have Patsey, and her four children. Her husband, Ben, has recently been sold to a Mr. Johnson of Baltimore. This has been a great affliction to them, and if I can make any arrangement to settle them all there, I would like to do it. Mr. Austen and Mary advise me to hire Patsey and the two larger children in the city, leaving the little ones at Forestdale. I should prefer to keep them with me, but even that would involve a separation, and Patsey deserves more attention to her wishes. She always waited on my dear mother as long as she lived. She considered that her first duty, and for her faithful services to her, I feel as if I could never too carefully study her comfort."

"Where are they all now?"

"Ben is in Baltimore with his new master, and Patsey with the children is at Forestdale. She went to Staunton with us at her own request. She was willing to leave her husband and children for a time, that she might still be with her mistress in her affliction. While she was absent, Ben was sold."

"I forget who Ben belonged to."

"To Mr. Rogers."

"Oh, yes, the same who refused to let his servants

come to Willie's Sunday school; and if his present master is, as I think, Joseph P. Johnson, a merchant, I fear he has not fallen into better hands."

"Do you know anything of him?"

"Only that he is a young man that lives for himself. If at any time he should be in want of money for his speculations or pleasures, he would not hesitate to sell him again. It may not be the same, but I heard that he had lately bought a fine boy from our county."

"I wish I could buy him for Patsey's sake. All their affairs were so carefully watched over by my mother, that they are poorly prepared to meet such a reverse."

"I remember how neat and comfortable their little cottage used to look down behind the garden, and old Mammy Betty in her white cap and spectacles, trying to keep the children in order, while their mother was at the house."

"Yes, poor old mammy lived but a short time after the sad breaking up, and though I shed many tears when I heard of her death, I have often since been thankful that she is safe. All the old places are so changed, you would scarcely recognize them."

"That must have saddened your visit."

"It did very much; but all places are"—— Susan stopped abruptly, and the blood rushed to her face, as she blamed herself at what she was about to confess; that all places were alike sad to her now. In a moment she smiled and said, "But I am now going to settle down with Frank and Mary, and make myself so busy that I shall"—— again she stopped. She was disclosing too much of the despondency that she had resolved in the strength of grace to conquer.

"I have been thinking of a plan," she resumed

quickly; "you must tell me how it strikes you. I would like to buy a small tenement, or if that could not be obtained, a small piece of ground, where I could have one put up, that Patsey and her children could live together and have a home, where poor Ben could sometimes see them, and rest himself. In Baltimore, I mean. Then I could look after them myself, and see that they do not want till the children are all large enough to provide for themselves."

"And in the meantime, you are depriving yourself of all pecuniary advantage from them, besides incurring considerable expense. Under such circumstances, they can rarely do more than take care of themselves."

"Oh, I should be quite satisfied if they do that. I scarcely expect it, however, at first. Patsey has never been placed in a situation to test her capabilities in that way. But as I am determined not to leave any of them in bondage, at my death, it is time now for her to learn to take care of herself. At any rate, as soon as they have proved themselves capable of self-government, I intend to liberate them. Till then, so far as I can prevent it, they shall not want the comforts of life."

"Why, Susie, what a little woman of business you are. This is a part of your character altogether new to me. I assure you I am receiving some valuable hints, if I should ever require them."

"But what do you think of the plan?"

"I think for disinterested generosity, it is just what I might have expected from my knowledge of the author," said Harry, as he watched the delicate crimson stealing into her cheek, though the downcast eyes and steady features betrayed no emotion. "The only defect that I can see in it, is, that you may be the sufferer."

"No, I can do very well without them. Of course, I should like to have Patsey about me, for she was my nurse, and is as much attached to me as I am to her. But there are enough at Aspen Grove to wait on me."

"Do you expect to end your days at Aspen Grove, Susie?" asked Harry with a smile that Susan did not see, though she caught its tone in his voice. "Young ladies sometimes change their position in life."

Just then Susan dropped a book from her hand, and stooped to recover it; not, however, before Harry had caught an expression that made him deeply regret his last words. "What could it mean? Why that evidently painful agitation? Had she really been attached to either of the Seldens? If so, why reject them? Or could there gave been some other attachment?" Not one of these questions could he answer; but at any rate, he felt that he had unwittingly touched some wound, and would have given worlds at that moment to recall the words. All this passed rapidly through his mind, while he assisted in finding the book.

When Susan again raised her head, all was calm, and she quietly asked him, if he had before met with the work he now held in his hand. Some little discussion followed on the comparative merits of different authors, and then both fell again into the easy strain of conversation which had been interrupted; but Harry thereafter cautiously avoided any approach to ground so manifestly dangerous.

"But, Susie," resumed Harry, "having arranged so admirably for Patsey, I hope you will not refuse to help me in my perplexity. It will not be so easy to dispose of the multitude at the Lodge, as it is to provide a home

for your own family. What can be done to prepare them for the freedom which I so ardently desire it may be my privilege to bestow upon them at some future day?"

"Can you not gradually send them to the African colonies?"

"I fear not. Some peculiar circumstances have tended to prejudice them against that course."

"But you have their confidence so entirely, that you may in time eradicate those erroneous impressions."

"Perhaps I might, but the fact of the almost fatal nature of the climate is so established, that I should dislike to take the responsibility of removing them till some more healthy location is provided. And then they are at present as poorly prepared to be thrown on their own resources, as you say Patsey is. So, my first object must be to fit them for taking care of themselves, should a way be opened for them to try it. How can that be done most effectually?"

Susan hesitated, for she saw Harry was really in earnest in asking her opinion, and feeling that her judgment must be far inferior to his, she proceeded with downcast eyes and fluctuating color.

"I have often revolved the subject in my mind, when thinking of the poor creatures at Forestdale, and pondered an experiment that I should like to see tried, but of course I can be but a theorist, and you may laugh at my Utopian schemes."

"I do not think that at all probable, and should like to hear your theory."

"Would it not be possible, after making an estimate of the expenses of each family or individual, to assign them their wages, and employ them as you would free laborers, still, of course, using your authority in all cases of incom-

petency or misconduct, having laws and penalties, as in other governments, and occasionally rewarding cases of extraordinary good conduct?"

She stopped and looked at Harry. He did not meet her eye, but seemed lost in thought. She timidly waited a while and then said, "You do not think it practicable."

He started, for his mind was completely absorbed in carrying out the ideas she had suggested. "Excuse me," he said, with a smile, "I was not inattentive—only too attentive. Your theory is certainly a most attractive one, and I can as yet see no objection to it. I thank you for the suggestion."

Again he seemed lost in thought. He was asking himself the question whether such a plan could be made to work successfully without efficient female aid, and what, in that way, could be expected from Rose. Apparently his cogitations were not very satisfactory, for he sighed as he turned again to his young counsellor.

"Susie, you have given me food for very important reflection, and I am glad you are to be near. I may often be glad to consult you further."

Susan's heart beat too quickly to suffer her to reply, and almost immediately they were joined by several other passengers. Susan now had time to review, with extreme vexation, her failure in self-control. Sudden and unexpected as was the observation of Harry, she felt that she ought to have been sufficiently on her guard to betray no emotion. After all her resolutions, to have failed so signally, was a disappointment, a mortification she could ill bear. One thought alone offered any alleviation to the pang of self-reproach. Though she was by no means sure her emotion was unnoticed, she was completely so that the true cause was unsuspected.

It was a long time before she could regain her composure, and listen with interest to the conversation of the gentlemen. Though Harry was the youngest among them, it was evident that she was not alone in her appreciation of the sound sense and extensive information exhibited in the part he bore in the discussion. It did not continue long, for the stage route passed within a few miles of Aspen Grove, and Mr. Austen's carriage was waiting at the nearest point to take her home.

CHAPTER XXI.

AUNT RODNEY'S PARTY.

"I've said I was a worshipper
At woman's shrine, yet even there
I found unworthiness of thought;
And when I deemed I just had caught
The radiance of that holy light
Which makes earth beautiful and bright—
When eyes of fire their flashes sent,
And rosy lips looked eloquent—
Oh! I have turned, and wept to find
Beneath it all a trifling mind."

WILLIS.

HARRY had written to say that he hoped to be in Baltimore in time to present himself at Mrs. Rodney's tea-table, and immediately after to be at Mr. Austen's. But owing to an accident which befell the stage a short distance out of town, they were detained as much as two hours on the road. Not doubting the anxiety that would be felt by his friends, he was glad to find that the first place where they stopped to deposit a passenger was but a few doors from Mr. Munroe's house.

He caught up his valise, sprang out, and hurried on, but to his surprise found the windows merely lighted by the flickering glow from the grates. The servant who answered his impatient ring, informed him that the family were spending the evening at Mrs. Rodney's. Disappointed and troubled he scarce knew why, he was turning off in haste, but the man respectfully detained him to ask if he should not carry his valise.

"Thank you, Joseph," he replied, only then remember-

ing the burden; "I will leave it, if you can bring it to Mrs. Rodney's. Is there company there to-night?"

"Yes, sir, I think so."

"A large party, Joseph?"

"I believe not, sir."

"Did Miss Rose go with Mrs. Munroe?"

"I cannot say certainly, sir; but they both left home in the carriage together."

Satisfied by this information that Rose was well, he could only suppose that they had not received his last letter, otherwise she could scarcely have chosen to spend the only evening of his stay in a party, especially as she had so recently given up all such scenes. The whole affair was a puzzle, but he had little time for conjecture. As he drew near the house, the brilliantly lighted windows, and the moving figures within, assured him that there was no mistake in Joseph's information of the party. Reaching the room appropriated to his use, he found every arrangement betokening an expected guest. A grate full of good blazing coals was by no means the least welcome; for, though the day had been mild, his exposure during the detention had completely chilled him. Directing the servant to inform Mrs. Rodney alone of his arrival, he waited impatiently for her appearance.

"Why, my dear child," she exclaimed, as she entered, "I am so glad you have come at last. What has been the matter? Did you meet with any accident, that you are so late?"

"Nothing more serious than two hours' detention in the cold. But how does it happen that you have company? I hoped to see you all in a more social and quiet way, as I have but one night to spend in town."

"Oh! Harry, that is nonsense. It is so long since you have made Rose anything of a visit, she is quite hurt about it. You will surely stay with her now at least a week. But how did you leave them all at the Lodge? How is Willie?"

"He now seems to be slowly but steadily improving; but oh! Aunt Rodney, the first part of my visit was a sorrowful time. His sufferings were dreadful, exceeded only by his saint-like patience and resignation."

"Dear boy! how anxious we have been about him. I have no idea that he can ever permanently rally. But, Harry, I must tell you how it happened about the company to-night. Of course, it is a great bore, but absolutely unavoidable. What will you say when I tell you that your warm friend and admirer, Mrs. Mason, is here, from your Long Run circuit?"

Harry expressed the pleasure he felt at the prospect of seeing Mrs. Mason, and waited for further information.

"Well, my dear, she is engaged every evening except this, till she leaves town."

"But, my dear aunt, I should have enjoyed seeing and conversing with her far more in a quieter way."

"Certainly, Harry; but you know, if you have not entirely forgotten the usages of society, that there is an etiquette about these things that must be observed. It would have been an unpardonable neglect on our part, if we had not shown her some attention of this kind."

As her auditor still continued silent, she proceeded:

"I assure you, it was only by urgent persuasion that Rose could be induced to come. I could not resist the desire I felt to show her to Mrs. Mason, though, as you know, the dear girl is so modestly sensitive on the sub-

ject of the engagement, that I promised not to give the least hint of it."

Harry drew a long breath, for this was a point on which he had vainly argued with Rose, trying to convince her that the secrecy she insisted upon was only a temptation to prevarication and deception.

Mrs. Rodney now rose, saying, "I dare not be absent longer. You will come to the drawing-room as soon as you have put yourself in order, of course."

"I will, if you will first ask Rose to come to the library, when you go down."

"Oh, yes, certainly. How soon?"

"In fifteen minutes."

Before the specified time had quite elapsed, Harry was pacing the floor of the library and listening for the step of his betrothed. He waited at least ten minutes before she came, but then had no reason to complain of the coolness of his reception, which on his part was reciprocated with a truth as well as warmth of affectionate joy. Again the spell of her beauty and caressing manner came over his spirit like magic, healing every wound, and dispelling every cloud. While they sat looking at each other in silence, no thought that she was less perfect in mind and heart than she was in person, intruded to mar his happiness. He had seldom seen her adorned for evening company, and never so becomingly as now. Her dress was simple, though rich in material. One jewel alone sparkled upon her breast, but her hair had evidently been under the touch of practised hands. It was arranged with exquisite taste, and nestling among its jetty curls reposed the glossy leaves and snowy petals of the japonica.

"Oh, my Rose," said Harry, looking down upon her

with undisguised admiration, "you are very lovely to-night, but"——

Instantly her fingers were pressed upon his lips, and she said, laughing, "No '*buts*,' Harry. If I am lovely in your eyes, *buts* are obsolete in such a connection."

"Well, then, dearest, *regrets*, that we cannot spend this one evening by ourselves, after so long a separation."

"Oh, I know it—how provoking it is; and you can't think how miserable I have been till you came. Mrs. Rodney told me about your accident, and I can scarcely believe now that you are unhurt."

"I am perfectly so, except by these untoward circumstances. On that subject, I cannot express my disappointment."

"Oh, never mind it, Harry; we will have time to-morrow to talk over all you wish; and you have not told me how you left Willie."

"He is, we hope, out of danger for the present. Are you not glad, dear Rose?"

"Certainly, I am very glad; you cannot doubt that. But, of course, it cannot be expected that he should ever be well."

"No, I fear not entirely; and yet I hope he may live many years, if it can be without suffering."

To this Rose made no answer, but rising, said she must return to the company.

"Not yet," said Harry, as he fondly drew her back to her seat, "I have a message from Susan."

"Oh, have you? Let me hear what the dear girl says."

"She says, she will expect you at Aspen Grove next week; and I am going to add my wishes that you will defer your visit till the last of the week, for my appoint-

ment is at Oak Hill on Sunday? How will that suit you?"

"Delightfully; but we will talk about it to-morrow. I must go now."

"One moment more, and I will go with you. I have to leave in the morning."

"Impossible, Harry."

"I almost wish it were, dearest; but I have letters urging me to be at Stamford's, for quarterly meeting, the day after to-morrow. In the present state of the roads, I could not get there in less than a day and a half. But if you will stay with Susan till Monday, I will bring you back to town, and stay several days."

The present occasion was not one on which Rose could afford to spoil her eyes by tears, or her lips by prolonged pouting; so, after some demur, she submitted with becoming grace, and promising to meet her lover again in the same place a few moments after supper, they proceeded to the rooms together. The guests were few in comparison with the size of the rooms, consequently there were not many between them and Mrs. Mason, as they passed in. She was conversing, in a very animated strain, with Mrs. Hunter Rodney, but catching a view of their figures, she stopped abruptly, in the midst of a speech whose eloquence was reflected in the face of her auditor.

"Oh, there he is," she exclaimed, "with Miss Carter, and where could you find another man who would look handsome beside such a houri? But he loses nothing of his true nobility of person or character in any situation."

The meeting was cordial on both sides. Harry was glad to hear from many of his friends, of whom he knew nothing since he left the circuit. Rose listened awhile, but feeling no interest in the subjects, was glad when

Mr. Eldridge, with his usual air of profound devotion, came to her side. For some time Harry's attention was absorbed by Mrs. Mason's lively narratives and remarks, and the low voices beside him were unheeded. Presently, however, the words, "Mrs. McArthur," "grand fancy ball," "are you going?" and the like, caused him involuntarily to listen for the answer. "Oh, I shall die of vexation if I do not, but I have no invitation; are they out?" "Not yet; but of course you will receive one as soon as they are, and I must request the honor of being your escort." "Thank you; but I do not expect an invitation. I have not called upon her for an age." "That is nothing, there will be ample time before it comes off; and I am sure she would consider her rooms deprived of their brightest ornament if not graced by the Queen of Flowers." Mrs. Mason continued to talk, but Harry's replies were confined to bows and monosyllables, till Mr. Eldridge, in highflown language, claimed of his beautiful but infatuated companion, her promise of a song. Uttering low soft words of flattery, he led her to the harp, arranged the music-stand, and followed with his admiring gaze every movement, till the last string was in tune.

The confused sound of voices became hushed, while attracted quite as much by the beauty of the tableau as by the music, all drew around the point of interest. Harry stood a little apart, watching in painful surprise the gratified vanity which spoke only too plainly, in the smiles and glances of the fair songstress. But when he recognized the prelude to a popular song, the words of which he considered decidedly objectionable, his first impulse was to leave the room, his second was to stay, and as soon as possible, to withdraw the giddy, thought-

less girl from her unsafe position, where perhaps circumstances beyond her control had placed her. Were it any one but Rose, he might be tempted to smile in the midst of his indignation at the extravagant looks and gestures of rapture, assumed by her attendant. But when he saw those looks met by smiles instead of the frowns they merited, he could endure no more, and left the room. Nor did he return till Hunter Rodney came to seek him.

"Why, Harry, you hermit!" was his salutation as he put his head in at the door. "Where are you hiding yourself? Supper will be announced in a few moments and you must be at your post. I must take Mrs. Mason to the table, and cannot stay. Come, my dear fellow, you have no time to lose, or all the pretty girls will be appropriated."

So saying he vanished. But Harry was in no humor to obey the summons. He cared for no pretty girls. The whole scene sickened him, and throwing himself down on a sofa, he determined to stay where he was. But knowing his Aunt Rodney would not allow him to remain there in peace, he again rose and walked up and down, struggling to control, at least, the outward manifestation of his displeasure sufficiently to enter the supper-room.

He was aware that the gay procession must pass his retreat, and he lingered, designing to follow in their wake. But just as he emerged, he encountered Rose, leaning upon the arm of Mr. Eldridge, both together springing forward to overtake the rest of the company. What had detained them he could not conjecture, but the face of the gentleman was in too close proximity to the ear of his blushing companion to soothe his already

ruffled temper. Too much of a man, however, to stoop even to *appear* in the character of the jealous lover, with resolute will he stilled his throbbing heart, and smoothed his troubled brow as he joined them. Scorning the petty exhibition of resentment with which the discomfited dandy regarded what he was pleased to consider an intrusion, he kept his place on the other side of Rose till they reached the supper-room.

Having no one in particular to wait upon, he tried to banish thought by making himself generally useful; but it did not avail, and after perpetrating one or two trifling blunders, from mere absence of mind, he withdrew to a corner and sat down. Presently he was joined by Mrs. Mason, and was able to enter with some degree of interest into her continued accounts of his old friends, carefully avoiding even a glance towards the part of the room where Rose was standing, lest he should see further cause to excite his just indignation. He need not have been so cautious. Rose had enough of woman's unerring instinct to feel that he disapproved the freedom of manner assumed by Mr. Eldridge, and though willing to let him feel a touch of her displeasure at his slight of her music, as well as his leaving town again so soon, she had not yet drank so deeply of the intoxicating cup of adulation as to blunt her sense of his vast superiority. With pretended anger at some fulsome compliment she had banished the humbled beau from her side, hoping that Harry would claim the vacant place. But Harry did not even look towards her.

When Mr. Rodney came to re-conduct Mrs. Mason to the drawing-room, Harry took leave of her, excusing himself from returning to the company. She and her

escort both commenced a spirited remonstrance, but it was of no avail, and he retired to the library, there to await, with what composure he could, another interview with Rose. How to conduct that interview was now the question.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE MASK FALLS.

"We have measured soul and spirit,
In mysterious rivalship,
And I find that I inherit
Hopes more high, and thoughts more deep.
Henceforth, then, our paths must sever;
Here companionship must end;
For my aspirations ever,
And my footsteps upward tend."

The sudden and striking change in Rose's appearance, as well as her presence in a fashionable party, had greatly surprised Harry, but he was far from wishing her to seclude herself from all society as she had recently done. Her dress was as modest and simple as could be expected under the circumstances. Thus far all was right; but Mr. Eldridge was a man of dissipated habits, and avowed skepticism. To find himself thus banished from her side by her morbid sensitiveness on the subject of her engagement, and that place so complacently occupied by a man whose imbecile mind and frivolous manners should have placed him beneath her notice, wrung his heart with anguish. He could not believe she would again visit Mrs. McArthur, whose open violations of feminine propriety had drawn upon her the censure of not only the religious, but in many instances of the merely moral part of the community.

What could he do? If he should attempt to expostulate with her in his present state of mind, he might only irritate where he intended to convince, and alienate where he hoped to allure to a conformity to his own views of Christian character. Should he, in the unguarded warmth of the moment, wound the heart which still, he doubted not, was all his own, how could he resist the wish to stay and soothe away the tears he imagined she would shed at the thought of having offended him. His feelings were rapidly softening under this aspect of the affair, when she presented herself before him. He went forward to meet her and took her hand, but it was coldly withdrawn, while with averted eyes she moved to a seat.

"If you have anything you wish to say to me," she began, "I have come to hear it; but as you choose to leave my company at so early an hour, it will probably not detain me long."

Harry was utterly confounded. While he had been meditating how he could best soften the expression of his wounded feelings, he unexpectedly found himself the object of haughty resentment.

"Rose," he said, as soon as his astonishment allowed him to speak, "I thought I had reason to feel grieved and hurt, but it appears you think otherwise. In what have *I* offended *you?*"

"It is not of sufficient consequence to be discussed at this time, Harry, but it is becoming more and more apparent that I am a person of no importance in your eyes. Every trifling engagement that presents, is an excuse to leave me. If it is always to be so, my life will be miserable."

"Oh, Rose, do not talk so. Do not turn away from

me. Let us understand each other. I thought you acquiesced in the necessity for my leaving you now."

"I did try to bear that as well as I could, but then you are so unkind to me"—— Here the tears began to flow.

"You surprise me, my beloved. How could I be unkind to you? Whatever it was, I am sure I never intended it."

"I am sure you do not like to hear me sing, for you left the room as soon as I began."

"My dear Rose, this is no time or place for an explanation of the events of the evening. Neither can I endure to defer it till we meet again. I have much to say to you, and I scarcely know how or when it can be said. But be assured I should have listened to your song with great pleasure if it had been suitable for a lady and a Christian to sing."

"That is always the way!" she exclaimed, snatching away the hand he had again taken; "you do not like anything I do. When I do not sing at all, you are not satisfied, and when I do, you leave the room. Everybody sings that song. It is very much admired."

"That is very likely. But, my dear Rose, I ask as a favor that you will never sing it again. You will gratify me in that, I feel sure."

"Oh, of course; to obey is a part of my duty. I may as well be learning the hateful lesson."

"Rose, you need never make that promise, unless you choose."

The deep sadness of the tone was startling. She looked in his face. It was ashy pale, but calm and resolute in its utter wretchedness. She saw instantly that she had gone too far. She had not now to deal with one of her ephemeral lovers, who could be frowned into submission to

her girlish caprices. Her vanity and self-love had been mortified by the slight put upon her music, and were by no means consoled by his neglect of her in the supper-room. She was instinctively aware that there was a counter-charge against her to be met, but by throwing him upon the defensive, she hoped to avoid danger from that quarter, and doubted not that a little salutary punishment would bring her refractory subject to her feet. But the state of mind evinced by Harry's last words together with his visible agitation, frightened her, for she was by no means prepared to take him at his word. Worldly ambition and affection both forbade. With feminine quickness she saw the danger, and instantly resolved on a change of tactics. Slipping her fingers again into his passive hand, and assuming one of her most beguiling smiles, she whispered,

"Dear Harry, you must know I was only in jest. Do not take it so seriously."

But Harry spoke not. The truth—the stunning truth—which had been for some time threatening from a distance had now burst upon him, and his bewildered senses reeled under the blow. Rose, to whom he had confided the happiness, the usefulness of his life, was not, could not be, a Christian! She was not even the amiable, affectionate girl he had believed her. Fatal mistake! After all the kind, paternal advice of Mr. Preston, all the careful training and counsels of the best of mothers, he had wrecked even the happiness of that beloved mother with his own. The present was bitter enough, but the future—he shuddered at the thought.

Regardless of the presence of the now weeping girl, he was only conscious of a desire to fly from himself

He started up, and began to walk back and forward with frantic haste. Rose followed him. She clung to his arm. She called him repeatedly by his name, till at last he stopped, and looking at her, his expression softened, and the color partially returned to his face.

"Poor girl!" he said, "I have alarmed and distressed you. I was wrong, for we must be sufferers together."

"Sufferers, Harry! I do not know what you mean. How are we to suffer? If you will only love me, and not look so dreadfully, I will be satisfied. I will do anything you ask."

"Love you, Rose! I do love you"—and the words, "That is the most fatal drop in my cup," rose to his lips, but were repressed, for he was again himself.

He led her back to her seat—he gently soothed her distress, as if the dart was not still rankling in his own bosom. His tenderness soon calmed her, for her penetration had not reached beyond the surface of the troubled waters.

She looked up with a smile, saying, "Why, Harry, I had no idea you were so passionate, I never saw you angry before."

Harry tried to smile in return, but the expression touched not beyond his lips. Rose felt the difference, and added caressingly, "I hope you will not be offended with me again, I was so frightened."

"I have not been angry, Rose—far from it. I cannot now explain myself fully. I still think it is necessary for me to leave in the morning, though it is a heavy trial for me to do so. But I must not detain you longer now. I

will write in a day or two, and do not fail to let me find you at Aspen Grove. Farewell! may the Lord in his mercy prepare us both to meet his will, whatever that will may be."

The solemn tone—the expression of pain that again passed over his features were unheeded by Rose, who had just begun to realize her mortification at the defeat she had experienced instead of the victory she had anticipated. Still, her love had not yet so entirely succumbed to her craving for universal and absolute homage, but that she was glad of what she considered a reconciliation on terms so easy. With a light heart and free step, she took her way to the drawing-room, again to reign the acknowledged "Queen of Love and Beauty."

After the interview preceding Harry's departure for Virginia, Rose, for a day or two, shut herself up in her room, *to make herself religious* as she vainly hoped. Again she was found in the class-room, boasting of those outward observances which profit nothing without the inward power. Prayer-meeting and love-feast were again tried, and again palled upon her vitiated appetite. After a few ineffectual struggles, she yielded to the voice of the charmer, and ceased to resist the entreaties of her friends to join in any method of *killing time* which offered. Those friends, on their part, resolved to lose nothing of the advantage thus gained, left her not an evening for reflection, but presented constantly new allurements to her vanity.

Having once given the rein to her absorbing passion for dress, excitement and admiration, she rushed forward with accelerated speed. If in moments of quiet, the upbraidings of conscience were heard, she hastened to

drown the unwelcome voice of the monitor in scenes of wilder mirth. Still she had no idea of resigning Harry and Hunter's Lodge; but as her time was short, she must make the best of it. After her marriage, she might for a time have to practice some self-denial; but once mistress of Hunter's Lodge and the game was in her own hands.

When Mrs. Rodney's party was proposed, her first thought was to decline, not only on account of Harry's known aversion to such scenes, but really preferring to spend the evening with him alone. Here Mrs. Rodney interposed, and by her arguments and persuasions led her to believe that that was the most certain mode of inducing him to prolong his visit. Indeed, that ambitious lady was now exulting in the apparent success of her plans, not doubting that her beautiful god-daughter would speedily withdraw from her uncongenial association with Methodists, unite with the *church*, and by the potent spell of love, draw Harry into the same desired harbor.

Frequently, during the remainder of the evening at Mrs. Rodney's, the recollection of Harry's pale features haunted Rose, and she would smile to herself as she thought, "How strange, that people so often say they are not angry when it is so plain to others that they are! And how tenacious men are about that silly word, *obey*. After all, the old saying is pretty true, 'Man has his *will*, but woman has her *way*.'"

With some reluctance, Rose looked forward to her visit to Susan, tempered by an acknowledged consciousness that it would be better to meet Harry in the country, in the peaceful household of the Austens,

than where his presence would be a restraint on her gay life. She would even prefer to stay there as long as he could remain with her rather than return to the city, and be obliged to assume a degree of sobriety, distasteful to herself, and only calculated to awaken the ridicule of her companions. Then again, the reception of Harry's promised letter somewhat sobered her for a time. She even declined a party, hurrying away from importunities she had not the strength of mind to resist, and appeared at Aspen Grove a day or two earlier than she had intended.

CHAPTER XXIII.

INCOMPATIBLE NATURES.

"Oh, what is woman—what her smile—
Her lips of love—her eyes of light—
What is she, if her lips revile
The lowly Jesus? Love may write
His name upon her marble brow,
And linger in her curls of jet—
The light spring flowers may scarcely bow
Beneath her step, and yet—and yet
Without that meeker grace, she'll be
A lighter thing than vanity."

WILLIS.

SUSAN had been in town several times, and with unfeigned grief and disappointment, failed to find in Rose the evidences of the great change, which causes old things to pass away, and all things to become new. In vain did she seek to draw from her an account of those interesting scenes through which she had passed. Rose avoided every approach to the subject, leaving her perplexed, and questioning whether Harry's judgment could have been misled by his affection. But no, she knew him better, and must wait for further developments.

Not long did she wait. Secretiveness was not one of the faults of Rose's character. On the contrary, though from want of the principle of truth, she was constantly led into petty deception and subterfuge to cover her willful imprudences, her natural frankness as constantly

betrayed them. Accordingly, as soon as she found herself alone with Susan, she was quite as communicative as was agreeable to her auditor.

"Now, Sue," she began, "what do you think of my carrying off Harry from you?"

"You have not carried him off from me, Rose," was Susan's answer, accompanied with a faint smile and her usual blush, "for I never had him in my possession."

"Then you would try to persuade me that you, and all the girls, were not breaking your hearts for him. But I shall not believe you, as it would be a poor triumph for me to have gained only what no one else wanted."

"And does that constitute the greatest value of the prize?"

"Not exactly, I assure you. But just now I am not very well pleased with him. Do you know of any one who will take him off my hands?"

Susan looked up from her work, with an expression that seemed to amuse Rose exceedingly, for she laughed heartily, and drawing from the folds of her dress, a very fine miniature likeness of Harry, she held it up, crying out:

"Who bids? who bids?—going very cheap. Who bids?" Then, as Susan only smiled in answer, she continued, "Not worth a single bid? Well, I suppose I shall have to keep him till there is a greater demand in the market. But indeed, Sue, I am really offended with him. I wish you would tell me how to manage him. He is the most troublesome subject in all my dominions."

"What has he been doing?"

"Oh, he has committed a variety of offences. In the first place, do you know, I think he is jealous."

"Jealous, Rose! How can that be?" asked Susan,

"for who," she thought, "can come in competition with Harry?"

"It is true. He is actually jealous of The. Eldridge."

Again Susan's work fell from her hands, as she replied, "Oh, Rose! and yet you could allow him to drive you out here!"

"To be sure I did. Do you suppose I am going to let Harry Bradford lord it over me now? If I do, what do you imagine is to become of me, after the knot is fairly tied?"

Susan was mute with astonishment, and Rose went on. "I have a great mind to show you a letter I received from him last week."

"Oh, no, dear Rose, I do not think that would be right."

"Susan, how can you be so absurd? It is not a love-letter. It is anything else. You would suppose it was a funeral sermon, that he had picked up by mistake, and sent to the post-office. I must and will read it to you, for indeed I want your advice, as a friend, what to do with him. He is beyond my comprehension."

Still Susan remonstrated; but Rose laughingly persisted, and producing the letter, began to read. Finding all efforts useless to prevent her, Susan tried to fix her thoughts on some other subject; but before she was aware, had become so deeply interested, as to forget everything else, almost holding her breath lest she should lose a word.

"My dear Rose:

"It is with no ordinary solicitude, I may almost say, apprehension, that I commence this letter; the first that I have ever written to you unwillingly, but duty to you, as well as to myself, compels me to the task.

"When I parted from you, you thought me angry, but it was a very different emotion that agitated me for a few moments beyond my own control. Even now I scarcely know how to enter upon an explanation. Oh my dear Rose, when you made me so happy last October, by giving yourself to me, I believed you to be a humble, earnest-hearted Christian, anxious only to learn the will of your Saviour, that you might do it; willing to renounce the empty vanities of this world, and seek the glories of the upper kingdom; willing even to deny yourself the innocent indulgences of life, that you might bestow of your abundance upon the destitute; eagerly seeking after the knowledge of divine things, not only for your own benefit, but that you might impart it to the ignorant. How strictly you seemed to watch yourself, lest even in non-essentials, you should appear to be one of the enemies of the cross. How sweetly you exhorted me to give myself to the missionary work, professing yourself not only ready to accompany me, but in the fervor of your zeal, almost willing to precede me to the field.

"Oh, Rose, it was in this character that I joyfully pledged to you my heart and hand in a betrothal that I consider scarcely less sacred than marriage itself. We are bound together, my beloved, by ties that involve us together in happiness or misery. Where do you now stand? Have you not in a great measure departed from that service in which you lately found your greatest delight? You say that 'it is difficult to feel an interest in religious people and meetings, while you are surrounded by the world.' Does not that very confession prove the importance of keeping your eye fixed upon the end of all these things, which is at hand? If now, while you have

but just begun again to tread the magic circle of worldly amusements, you feel its bondage, how will you endure to banish yourself from these glittering scenes to some quiet country home, to the society of the humble, unobtrusive followers of the Lamb? I again ask you, where do you now stand?

"I stand, I humbly trust, on the same ground where we both stood, when we pledged ourselves, not only to each other, but to our common Master. I am no otherwise than I then was, a sincere, but unprofitable servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, shortly to renew, in the solemnities of my ordination, the vows I long since assumed, to be his willing minister to my life's end. Rose, I was dedicated to that ministry by my revered father, in my infancy. Whatever of worldly goods He, in his providence, may see fit to commit to my care, I desire to consecrate to his service, occupying, merely as a faithful steward, till he comes to resume his own. I hope to spend my remaining years, be they many or few, in the labors and privations of the itinerancy.

"This is to you no new aspect of my position. It was clearly and distinctly portrayed to you before I even asked you to link your destiny with mine. With what a trembling heart, I inquired if you could share such a destiny. And, oh, how that heart bounded with joy and gratitude, when, in tones so low but steadfast, you answered, 'I can—I will.' Oh, Rose, by the treasured memory of that hour, as well as by far higher and holier considerations, I entreat you to examine your own heart and conscience, and tell me if you are now willing to renew and ratify those simple but solemn words, 'I can—I will.'

"But I dare not leave the subject here. I must faith-

fully and affectionately warn you of the misery that awaits us both, if this engagement is fulfilled, and it should afterwards appear that you have not counted the cost. 'Can two walk together except they be agreed?' I will not—I dare not disguise from you, that some of your present associates cannot be mine. Nay more—I could never consent that my wife should receive the attentions of such a man as Mr. Eldridge. I am convinced, my dear Rose, that you do not know him as he is. If you did, you would shrink from his flatteries as I would have you. I will not offend you by speaking more plainly on this subject; but let me already claim the privilege of shielding you from the evils of which your innocence is unconscious. I should also have the same objection to the brilliant but dangerous Mrs. McArthur. You must be aware that her name is coupled with a degree of reproach, that I cannot bear should sully the purity of even your ceremonious acquaintance. Mr. Munroe's business relations with her brother, may lead him to think it necessary to keep up some intercourse, but you are not so entangled. Do not renew the acquaintance that you so lately renounced as unsuitable for a Christian, and that I could never sanction.

"You may perhaps say that I take my ground boldly and firmly for a lover. I do, my dear Rose; but I do it in all sincerity, for your happiness as well as my own. By fostering a taste for such society as that which the two individuals just mentioned would lead you to desire, you separate yourself from me; and in the relation we expect and hope to bear to each other, what could be more disastrous, more subversive of true happiness?

"But, oh, my beloved Rose, to separate yourself from me is a small thing, compared to a separation from that

Saviour who bought your precious soul with his blood. In view of this solemn relation, I again ask you, where do you now stand? Must I admit the heart-sickening apprehension that you have left your first love and turned again to the beggarly elements of the world? I beseech you to convince me of my mistake, if it is one. I cannot describe to you what a weight you will raise from my heart by so doing—a weight which fell upon it with such bewildering force, that even its unavoidable outward manifestation, you thought was anger. But I will not dwell upon a theme so painful.

"Bear with me a little longer. There is one other point on which I would speak now, that there may be no vestige of misunderstanding between us. Again I must remonstrate against the evils of concealing our relation to each other. As I have before remarked to you, I can see no sufficient reason for it, but many against it. It must be a constant temptation to falsehood, if not in word, surely in action. Had you not avowed yourself so sensitive on the subject, I should have conducted you to the harp on the evening of our last meeting, and arranged the music for you. Then, my dear Rose, you would not have given me the pain of hearing you sing a song that to me appears utterly unfit for a lady's lips. Let our engagement be acknowledged, and it will guard you from many a snare. If you consider me not unworthy of you, do not disown me. I have always felt proud and happy to own you as my affianced wife, and cannot consent to recede from that ground. So you see it is too late to attempt concealment, even if it was desirable.

"And now, my beloved, if I have in aught appeared harsh in this long and grave letter, forgive me, and be assured it was unintentional. Every word has been dic-

tated by a conscientious desire to remove the least possible obstacle to our perfect union of hearts, now and forever. Do not, I beg, disappoint my hope of hearing from you before we meet at Aspen Grove. The Lord bless you, and cause his face to shine upon you, and give you that true peace that the world can neither give nor take away. And may he hasten the day when in the holiest and sweetest of all earthly unions we shall together devote ourselves to his service.

"Your own faithful

"HARRY."

Rose never paused or took her eyes from the paper, so determined was she that Susan should hear the whole. When she finished, Susan's needle was still, but she was bending over her work, while tear after tear dropped fast upon it.

"Well, I declare!" exclaimed Rose, "if you are not crying! Why, Susie dear, you are as romantic as Harry himself. You would make a capital pair. Why did you not bid him off when I offered him for sale just now, for I dare say, when I see him, he will talk me into anything he chooses—he always does. I shall cry as you do now, and promise to be a good girl. Then we shall kiss and be friends, as the children say. So you will lose your chance."

By this time Susan had regained her composure, and asked Rose how she answered the letter.

"I have not answered it at all."

"Oh, Rose! how could you be so unfeeling? Do you not see how devotedly he loves you? He expects so much of you. Do not disappoint him, it will break his heart."

"Break his heart!" exclaimed Rose, laughing. "No, my dear, men's hearts are made of sterner stuff. Did you ever hear of a man's dying of a broken heart? It is much more likely that he will break mine." And Rose walked hastily to the window. Soon she came back, laughing again. "Just think of his insisting upon my giving up poor The.—my most faithful knight!"

"But you know, Rose, he is said to be dissipated and skeptical."

"Oh, that is only one of Harry's puritanical notions. I dare say he drinks too much champagne when he dines out, but that's nothing unusual. And as to skepticism, he says himself, a man cannot help his opinions, and how can he?"

"Oh, Rose, how differently you expressed yourself when you wrote to me after the camp-meeting."

"I dare say I did, for I am sure I tried as hard to be religious as any one could."

"But you still hold your membership in the church, do you not?"

"Oh yes, and I mean to be very good some day or other, when I am married and go on a circuit. I shall dress like a Quaker grandmother, call everybody *brother* and *sister*, and only smile once a week to prevent me from forgetting."

"Rose, I cannot bear to hear you talk so;" and she threw her arms round her, tears again filling her eyes.

Rose fervently returned the embrace, and to Susan's extreme amazement, burst into a passionate flood of tears. For a long time she wept and sobbed without restraint or interruption, for Susan, thankful to see such a manifestation of feeling, rather than the wild, reckless strain in which she had been expressing herself, spoke

not till the tempest began to subside. Then her tender expostulations drew from her language more in accordance with her real feelings.

"Oh, Susan, the truth is I love Harry. I have never really loved any one else. I cannot give him up. But he wants me to be religious, and I cannot. I have tried, I even persuaded myself that I was so. And oh, the gloom and misery that it brought instead of the happiness he promised me. I cannot bear it. I might just as well be buried alive."

"But, dearest, that only proves that you did not find the pearl of great price. If you will seek and obtain that, it will satisfy your largest desires."

"I do not see how I can do anything more than I have done. I shut myself up from all company. I laid aside all ornaments, wore no jewels, no curls, and attended all the religious meetings that I could, besides trying to pray, and read the books that Harry gave me. I never passed a day without reading some of the Bible, though I must confess, I cannot understand the hundredth part of it. What could I do more?"

"The difficulty, my dear Rose, consists in your having begun wrong. You sought to cleanse your own heart by outward observances, in your own strength, before you brought it to the fountain, in which alone we can be healed and cleansed from the power and pollution of sin. That you should do first. Only believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, asking in humble faith for a new heart. Then all these dry and profitless duties will become wells of water to your thirsty soul. No matter how strenuous our efforts to draw near to Christ, if we stop short of the actual union of our souls with him, it is all nothing."

"I do not understand anything about it, only that instead of being any better for being religious, I believe I was worse; and I am sure a more doleful time no poor creature ever endured."

"But I thought you were very happy when you wrote to me."

"Well, so I was; but do you know, I believe it was only Harry's love that made me happy. I knew I was pleasing him, and that was enough. I wanted to go with him to some distant country, where I should have him entirely to myself, deluded all the time with the idea that it was religious zeal. But I know now it was not."

"There is another secret of your want of success in finding true happiness in religion. You loved the creature more than the Creator, and sought to place an idol of your own on the throne of the great God, who is a jealous God, and will not give his glory to another. And yet, with all your love for Harry, you cannot, for his sake, give up the pleasures of the world that are so unsatisfying. How strange!"

"But why must he wish me to make a perfect nun of myself? Why cannot he let me enjoy myself a little? He does not love me enough to stay with me."

"Oh, Rose, he cannot. He is a minister of the Gospel, and must be about his Master's business."

"Then let him take a parish, like other ministers, and live like a gentleman. How provoking it is to hear him talk of ending his days on a circuit, when everybody knows that Col. Hunter has had two attacks of paralysis, and that Willie is in a confirmed consumption."

"Why no, Rose; it is thought now that Willie may live many years."

"I do not believe it—I *will* not believe it. I will never be the wife of a circuit rider."

"Rose, would you purchase the gratification of your own will by the sacrifice of the gentle, lovely Willie?"

"I am sure there is no one better prepared to die than he is."

"Oh, I beg of you not to talk so. It shocks me to hear you."

"I am sorry if it does; but I cannot help it. I am desperate. I tell you I cannot give up Harry, and the wife of a circuit rider I will never be."

"But if you gain Harry, with all the pleasures and splendors of the world besides, and lose your own soul, what will it profit you?"

"That is just the way they all tried to frighten me at camp-meeting, and it was of no use. But I came out here on purpose to get your advice, and you do not give it to me on the only subject on which I want it."

"What is that subject?"

"How I can please Harry, and induce him to give up his fanaticism."

What you call his fanaticism, I call his Christian integrity; and as long as he is Harry Bradford he will never swerve from its minutest requirement."

"And is that all the comfort you can give me, when you know I am so miserable?"

"Dear Rose, I would gladly comfort you if I could; but so long as you persist in trying to draw water out of the broken cisterns of the world, you can expect little comfort. You thirst after happiness, and you are unwilling to resign Harry. I can only say, 'Seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all

these things shall be added unto you.' I know of no other way."

The advice did not seem to harmonize with the taste of the poor blinded girl, who received it in silence, and thus ended the conversation. She continued afterwards moody and discontented, when nothing occurred to break the quiet of the family; but if company came, she was, as usual, excited and gay, by finding herself the object of attention and admiration; again sinking back to gloom and despondency when alone with Susan. So passed the few days till Harry came.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A HOLLOW PEACE.

"Yet it grieves me thus to sever,
I could almost fold my wings
By thy side to rest forever,
Sacrificing nobler things.

"But if thus all else forgetting,
Wouldst thou—couldst thou make me blest?
No! and while the past regretting,
I must seek a surer rest."

After Harry parted from Rose, on the evening of the party at Mrs. Rodney's, released from the necessity of longer veiling his feelings, he sunk into a chair, and remained for some time almost stupefied under the thronging waves of thought that overwhelmed him; but a burst of more exuberant mirth from the drawing-room reached his solitude and roused him. He started, rushed up stairs, gained his own room, and locked the door. Thus secure from intrusion, he stood in the middle of the room. In his bewilderment he looked at every familiar object that furnished or adorned the room, like one awaking from a troubled dream. They seemed to return his gaze with a mocking smile—they seemed to say, "We are all the same. We have contributed to your comfort often when you were free to present time, talents, life, to the Lord. What are you now? A poor deluded Samson, shorn of your strength."

It was the same room that had been occupied by his mother during her visit to the conference. The same where, in the glow of his young enthusiasm, he had soothed her grief at the announcement of his reappointment to Long Run circuit. Never did the image of that beloved mother visit his spirit when there was greater need of its calming, subduing power, for it seemed as if the natural impetuosity of his disposition had gained the ascendency over education, principle, religion, all restraining influences, tempting him to renounce the ministry, as being utterly unworthy and unfit to assume its sacred offices.

He threw himself again into a chair, covered his face with his hands, and groaned. "My mother, my mother!" burst from his burdened heart, "why do you not speak to guide or restrain your distracted son?" and yet he long seemed to feel that presence, only to resist and repel its gentle pleadings. Still, the habit of heeding it was too strong, and almost in spite of his efforts to the contrary, a whisper seemed to arrest his attention. "My son, you are doing wrong." That whisper was from within, and yet it breathed the very tones of that loved voice. He paused—he listened, all was still around him—but as in the days of childhood, his mother's voice had led him to the feet of his Saviour.

He immediately threw himself upon his knees, with deep contrition, confessing his momentary rebellion, and praying for forgiveness, for submission to the divine will, and for light to discern the path of duty. Refreshed and strengthened, he then addressed himself to the task of self-examination.

At the bar of conscience he stood convicted of too

great precipitation in yielding to the charm of mere personal beauty. True, it was not till he believed Rose was renewed by grace, but the sad result proved that a more deliberate course would have been safer. Not all the wishes and urgency of his family could excuse him to himself, or hide from his eyes that he had been too hasty.

Only a short time had elapsed since he had been ready to say that the strength of his own love was the most fatal drop in his cup. Now he felt that he could unflinchingly steel his heart against the pleadings of that love, even though it should leave a life-long wound, rather than cramp his energies in the service to which he had pledged himself, by consummating a union with one whose opposing wishes and pursuits would constantly tend in an adverse direction. This he felt he could do; but the idea of asking a similar sacrifice of a tender woman's heart, was not to be admitted. That Rose was ardently attached to him, he could not doubt, and that entirely precluded any thought of sundering the tie.

What could he do? He could think of nothing, but to use his utmost endeavors to draw the infatuated girl away from the vortex to which she was so evidently returning. If, indeed, the indications of a saving change, in which he had so fondly trusted, were delusive, a throne of grace was still accessible. He would unceasingly pray for her conversion, he would constantly and affectionately warn her of her danger, and draw her with the cords of love to the foot of that cross, where alone they could be united in one common faith, one common hope of a glorious immortality.

No time was to be lost—he would write to her now—

before he slept. Pen and paper were at hand; but his thoughts were yet too confused, the blood was coursing in too rapid currents through his brain. The pen was dropped, and the letter was postponed, till he could do justice to the importance of the subject.

Towards morning, his aching head was laid upon the pillow, but not to sleep. Busy thought would not be stilled, and he joined the family at the breakfast-table, with heavy eyes and pallid cheeks. All noticed his unusual appearance, and made anxious inquiries about his health, urging him not to leave till he was better. He was obliged to acknowledge to himself that he felt sick enough to justify a return to his bed for the rest of the day, but in his present state of self-condemnation, punishment was more congenial than indulgence, and yet his restless desire for change of place made that, too, seem like indulgence. The dawn of a healthier feeling sent him off on his lonely ride for quarterly meeting.

The first bright object that met him, when he reached his destination, was the face of Mr. Temple.

"Why, Bradford, my dear fellow," he exclaimed, as he sprung from the piazza to meet him. "We had given you up. What makes you so late? But what is the matter? You are sick."

"No, my dear brother, I am not sick, only a little weary. But if I was sick, the sight of you, so unexpectedly, would almost restore me to health. How comes it about?"

"I'll tell you all about it. But come, this is *our* room, for you see I have taken possession in your absence. The house is very full, and Sister Levison has put a couch in for me to sleep on."

"None could be more welcome to share my quarters

than you are. But now tell me how I came to be so favored?"

"I will, if you will sit down and warm yourself. There, now you begin to look a little more comfortable. I have just come from Baltimore. Mary has been there for several weeks, and has the finest boy—just two weeks old. He bids fair to beat even Jemmie, and you know, he is a wonder in your eyes and mine. You are to baptize him at conference, the first thing you do after your ordination, and I wish you to understand that the gentleman's name, without waiting for the ceremony, is Harry Bradford."

The pleasure with which this information was received, brought the brightness again into Harry's face.

"Well," resumed Mr. Temple, "I was on my way home the day before yesterday, when I met a message informing me of the uncertainty of your being able to get here, and urging me to come, if possible, to fill the place. I found the roads so heavy that it would be very difficult to reach my appointment, so I struck across the country, and here I am, not a little drawn, it must be confessed, by a faint hope of seeing you. But, my dear brother, something is surely the matter. Do you bring bad news from young Mr. Hunter? I heard he was not so well."

"He is much better again. We feel quite encouraged about him now."

Harry was unaccustomed to the disclosure of his deeper feelings, save to his mother, and he shrunk from it now. But he had said he was not sick, and without direct falsehood, he could not withhold from the anxious inquiries of this tried friend some general points of the truth. As Mr. Temple had been present at the supposed

conversion of Rose, and was afterwards apprised by Harry of their engagement, his interest in the present phase of their history was not only lively but altogether natural. By a question here, and a remark there, judiciously thrown in, he managed at last to obtain a pretty clear view of the case, and Harry was forced to acknowledge that he found more comfort from his manly sympathy, and sensible advice, than he had expected from any earthly source. In another way, also, he soon felt the advantage of the confidence from which he at first held back; and that was, that Mr. Temple often helped him to parry the questions of other friends, as to the unusual seriousness which had so completely dimmed the brightness of his smile. Not that he allowed himself to appear, in his conversation or manner to general observers, as a claimant for sympathy. In no way did he say, as it is so often done, "I am a sufferer, pity me." He diligently attended to the duties devolving upon him, and endeavored, as far as possible, to conceal the gnawing worm in his bosom. All, who had known him in his usual genial mood marked the change, but as he could no longer disguise from himself the truth, that he was not well, they ascribed the cloud to that as the primary cause, when it was, in fact, only a consequent of the heavier pang of heart-sickness.

As soon as he could command time, he wrote the letter to Rose that he had promised. Mr. Temple would willingly have relieved him from preaching, by filling his place, but Harry said, "No; as the difficulty into which he had plunged himself was one that in all probability would cripple him in his ministerial usefulness, he must begin betimes to struggle against it." He preached, and it was generally remarked that even a deeper humil-

ity, a more heavenly unction graced his words than usual.

The meeting was continued for several days. Mr. Temple stayed with him to the end, and proved himself a brother indeed. They parted not till they were some miles from the place where the meeting had been held.

Harry went on to his next appointment, cheered by the hope that he should find a letter awaiting him from Rose. A letter full of tender regrets for the past, and promises of more loving conformity to his wishes, as well as to the character of the life she was voluntarily entering upon. As he drew near the place, he found himself urging his horse forward, and even straining his eyes to catch the first glimpse of the building where the post-office was kept, as if the very walls would show some indication of the coveted letter. And how strangely cold and indifferent sounded the "*No*," that sent him away without the comfort he had every right to expect.

He consoled himself as well as he could, by thinking of the various causes which could have prevented Rose from writing. As there had not been time for an answer to his own letter, he again looked forward to that as a balm for his wounded feelings. But when he reached the last appointment before Oak Hill, without hearing, he was almost ready to plead actual inability to preach, and hasten on to Aspen Grove. A moment's reflection freed him from that temptation, and not till all his duties were performed, and he was on his way to the house of Mr. Austen, did he find time to commune with his sad thoughts. Then, as gloomy forebodings of unknown evil cast their shadows over his mind, he carefully reviewed every word that he could recollect of his expostulations and exhortations to Rose, weighing every phrase in

the fear that some unguarded expression had grieved or offended her. But he could not remember anything that should have produced such an effect. Again and again, he laid himself with his heavy burdens at His feet who has promised to sustain them for us, and us under them. Comforted and strengthened as often as he was enabled to do this, in faith, he rode on. Part of the way was in some degree shortened by an occasional rencounter with a chance wayfarer like himself, and late in the afternoon he reached Aspen Grove.

Rose, in the meantime, owing to her volatile nature, had derived little benefit from the disinterested counsels and persuasions of her friend. All had been unavailing to induce her to answer Harry's letter, till the last hour had elapsed when it could possibly have reached him. Then, weak in purpose and vacillating as ever, she began to see that she had done wrong, and wept to think of the pain she had inflicted.

Knowing the time when Harry might be expected, Susan proposed to her sister to make a long deferred visit, that there might be no interruption to the interview, which, she trusted, would for the present, at least, heal all wounds in that faithful heart, whose happiness she prized above her own. If a transient thought intruded that, when Rose had forever lost his confidence, as she feared must be the case, he might form a second attachment, it was as instantly crushed; for how could that be? Could she expect such an event in her own case? No—she believed it was impossible. She had yet to learn that the love which could exist in such a heart as Harry's, must be based on character, not on mere person. Person may attract, but can never hold a virtuous love. Short-sighted mortals often imagine that

the character, the object of their love, exists in the person that attracts them; but no sooner is it made clear to an upright mind that it does not, than all is changed. The love still exists, but finding not its heavenly mate, it returns to the heart whence it sprung, never unwounded, sometimes even unto death; but often its real object is found in after times, and reciprocates its yearning tenderness, healing all its sorrows.

Susan's cheek was pale, but there was a light in the depths of her soft eye, kindled at no earthly altar. There was a firmness in her graceful step, as she moved about ministering to the comfort and pleasure of all around her, that spoke of a peace and resignation within, far removed from the waves of earth-born sorrow.

When she returned from her visit, she saw at a glance that the faces of her friends bore the impress of deep feeling. She noticed the watery glance with which Rose returned the tender solemnity of Harry's eye. It seemed to say—"Do not look so serious, so sad. I will do or be anything you desire." Harry, she thought, looked as if the weight had been but partially removed; and frequently, during the evening, she detected the heaving of the breast, when an almost convulsive sigh was repressed in its struggle to escape. She imagined that it was with effort he bore his part in the conversation of the fireside. It might be a mistake, but she felt that his voice faltered in offering up the evening prayer. At any rate, the bare surmise pained her gentle breast; and though no one else seemed to notice anything out of the common way, she was glad when the time came for separation.

CHAPTER XXV.

DEEDS NOT WORDS.

"The time is o'er when whispered, honied words
Are food enough for love. Would'st credit me?
Beneath her sweetest, softest blandishments—
Aye, 'neath those sparkling, quiv'ring, blushing smiles,
Dimpling'to wondrous beauty her fair face,
Steal forth cold doubts—most villainous suspicions,
That poison joy, just at the beaker's brim.
I tell thee, Pedro, this day's need demands,
From women even, acts to seal their truth."

When Susan and Rose reached their room, the latter hastily saying they would undress each other, dismissed the disappointed attendants, who had promised themselves a few bits of entertaining gossip from the well-known heedlessness of "Miss Rose's" tongue. Closing the door herself, in her anxiety to be freed from the restraint of their presence, Rose clasped her arms around the neck of her friend and sobbed out,

"Oh, Susan, Harry is so good—so lovely—I wish I could be like him."

"Dearest Rose," was the whispered response, "what we ought to be, and desire to be, we can be."

"No, no—it is impossible. I can never be what he expects me to be. It is of no use for me to try."

"Did you tell him so?"

"No, indeed; I would not for the world. I should never see him smile again."

"What do you intend, then? Do you expect him to give up for you what he considers Christian duty, while you are not willing to make any sacrifice for him?"

"Why, Susan! I am making sacrifices continually to please him. I refused Mrs. Merton's invitation, and came out here sooner than you expected me, on purpose to avoid the temptation to dance. He ought to do as much to please me."

"Can you see no difference in the nature and tendency of the sacrifices you require him to make, and those you offer in exchange?"

"Not so very much as you would suppose, when you take into consideration that I should just pine away and die, out on a circuit, among the country clod-hoppers, their prosy wives and dowdy daughters, while he would do as much good and be far more comfortable in a city parish, than in riding about the country with his saddle-bags, like a peddler of small Yankee notions, preaching to a set of people who care no more for his handsome person and elegant manners than they would for an ugly, awkward clown."

"Your observations would apply just as well to the excellent missionaries of the Episcopal church. Do you think they ought to give up the work to which they are called, because some of them are handsome men, and would appear to advantage surrounded by the pomps and splendors of cathedral service?"

"Susan, I declare you are as unreasonable as Harry. You do not comfort me at all."

"How can I, my poor Rose, when we view these subjects in so different a light? and how can you expect comfort so long as your inclinations and duty lead in opposite directions? Indeed, I can see no happiness in

store for either of you, unless you can consent to become what he thought you when he first loved you."

This was pressing the point more closely than was agreeable to Rose, and she again sunk into silence which Susan was careful not to break, for she had found the difficulty beyond her powers of remedy.

Harry's meditations were no more satisfactory than those of the wakeful Susan. His conversation with Rose had been full of feeling on her part; but in spite of himself, he was beginning to distrust its depth, if not its sincerity. The idea when it first presented itself was rejected with indignation. But it returned. It would return against every effort to the contrary. She loved him, there could be no doubt of that, and with the coöperation of such an ally in her own bosom, what might not be expected from prayer and patient waiting?

An incident, however, which soon occurred, threw light of a less pleasant nature upon his mind, revealing the fallacy of this last fond hope.

While Harry was still at Aspen Grove, he received a message, asking him to visit a sick man by the name of Benford, who lived in the neighborhood. The day was so bright and fair, that Rose proposed to Susan to walk with him a part of the way. Bonnets and cloaks were soon brought, and they set off in better spirits than had been enjoyed since their meeting. All seemed to feel the genial influence of the first spring-like day, and wandered on farther than the girls had intended. At last they turned back, but had proceeded only a few rods when they were met by a servant running across a field, and begging them to hurry home as fast as possible, for a dog of unusual strength and fierceness had

been teased by some rude boys into such a paroxysm of fury, that he had broken his chain, and they knew not where he was.

Rose, screaming with terror, and calling upon Susan to follow, fled towards home. But Susan, more self-possessed, hurriedly asked the man where the dog had been last seen. Receiving for answer that he had run into Mr. Benford's yard, she waited for no more, but to the consternation of the man, sprung past him, and ran with the speed of a deer in the direction of the greatest danger. He ran after her, calling in vain for her to stop. She heeded not—her one idea was Harry, far before her, slowly and unconsciously advancing towards the enraged animal. In the agony of her terror, it seemed to her that she made no progress, but in reality her flying footsteps gained rapidly upon the form on which her eyes were riveted, expecting every instant to see the dog spring upon him. She tried to call him, but breathless with fright, her voice failed to reach him, till within a few steps of overtaking him. Then he turned, and as much alarmed as she was, hastened to meet her. Giving him no time for inquiries, she caught his arm and drew him on, gasping only, "Come—come fast—the dog!" His first thought was of some terrible disaster to Rose, and he eagerly inquired where she was. "Safe—gone home," was all the answer; and thus reassured of her probable safety, he tried to calm the distress for which he was at a loss to account. Almost immediately they reached a cottage. Without ceremony, Susan drew him into the open door, shut it, slipped the bolt, and dropped sick and faint into a chair.

She was well known to the inmates of the cottage, who immediately set about administering such restora-

tives as were at hand. If Harry moved from her side, an imploring glance, and half-uttered, "Don't go," instantly recalled him. In a few moments the man who had given the alarm, followed them with the welcome information that the dog was secured and all danger over.

Harry then learned the history of the case, and that Rose was no doubt in safety, as the dog had been found in an opposite direction. The next question was, how Susan was to get home. She thought she could walk, but on attempting to rise from the chair, she was obliged to allow that she was weaker than she had imagined. She was quite confident that a short rest would restore her, and if Harry would make his intended visit, and call for her on his return, she should be as well as ever. But Harry did not feel at all sure of that, and could not be induced to leave her.

Confused and agitated by the warmth of his gratitude, and believing she should recover much quicker in his absence, she still urged him to leave her to the care of the good woman, who evidently felt as if she could not do enough to express her respectful affection for Miss Allington, the teacher of her children in Sunday-school, her own kind friend in sickness, and of everybody who needed. Still Harry lingered, unwilling to go, till all discussion was ended by the arrival of Mr. Austen with the buggy. Rose, he informed them, had reached home in safety, but so completely overcome with fright as to be unable to give any account of her companions. To allay his own anxiety, as well as that of Mrs. Austen, he had started out to find them if possible.

His fears for Rose at an end, and seeing Susan affec-

tionately cared for, Harry pursued his way to Mr. Benford's. But with the removal of those fears came a painful consciousness that Rose had consulted her own safety only, while Susan, who, as he said to himself, must certainly be expected to feel less for his welfare, exposed her own person to an attack from the furious animal that she might secure his escape. He doubted not that she would have done as much for any fellow being in danger—but oh, how blessed the man that reigned in that noble heart! Who could he be? And could he be ignorant of the treasure he possessed? She did not seem happy in her love, and yet so patient, so thoughtful for others! What could cause the difference between her and Rose? The one professing so much affection as she did for him, and the other probably attached to some one else. "Oh, selfishness, selfishness, thou bane of all that is lovely in woman!"

Harry almost spoke these words aloud, as he began to question whether a sentiment worthy of the name of love could exist under its blighting influence. He ventured not an answer, and yet a strange sense of relief, as when some heavy burden is partially raised from the weary shoulders, followed the suggestion, that perhaps she did not really love him. Before he had time fairly to analyze the feeling, he was at the end of his walk. But notwithstanding the change of scene and circumstance which claimed his interested attention at the bedside of the sufferer, the same harassing cogitations accompanied him home.

He found Rose reclining on a sofa with all the languid grace of an Eastern princess. She received him with a fresh burst of tears, and instead of expressing any solicitude on his account, at once claimed his sympathy and

attention to the story of her sufferings from fright, and the excruciating nervous headache which they had occasioned.

"How fortunate you were," she remarked in a faint voice, "to find a refuge so near, while I had to run, it seemed to me, miles, just ready to die of fatigue. Oh, I thought I should never get to the house! I am sure that horrid creature was mad, though Mr. Austen and Mary both insist that dogs do not go mad in cold weather. And did you ever know of any person so completely frightened out of her senses as poor Sue was? Instead of running home at the first alarm, as I did, she just flew in the very teeth of the dog."

In this way she continued to make herself the object of attention, regardless of Harry's seriousness, who found his compassion much more awakened by the pale cheek and drooping eyes of his gentle but heroic preserver, although she said nothing to defend herself against the charge of want of presence of mind.

When tea was announced Rose sat up, and declaring herself absolutely unable to walk, consented to be supported by Mr. Austen and Harry to the table, the merriment of the one, who rallied her upon being devoured by a mad dog in winter, serving as a cover for the increasing gravity of the other. When they returned to the parlor, several gentlemen came in, and Rose, after she had again narrated her escape from impending death, recovered her spirits, and the evening passed off as gaily on her part as if nervous headaches were out of fashion.

None of these indications of character were now lost upon the awakened judgment of Harry. The scales had indeed fallen from his eyes, and Rose was the same Rose

that she had appeared to him before her fancied conversion, with the melancholy exception of being far less sweet tempered. So true it is, that natural virtues, the beautiful fragments of man's pristine state, without the sanctifying power of grace, dwindle away or become distorted in their growth, till instead of virtues they become positive vices. What had once appeared sweetness of disposition, had now taken the form of self-complacency. What had borne the semblance of tenderheartedness, had sunk into a sickly sentimentality. What seemed so attractive as affectionateness, was now too often mere blandishment assumed to gain some selfish advantage.

And this was the woman selected by his relatives for his wife! to share his labors, to cheer his sorrows, to assist him by her counsels and prayers in his efforts to extend the Redeemer's kingdom! But all this inflicted not the deepest wound. It was the barbed arrow of self-condemnation, that seemed to be poisoning the very principle of life in his young heart.

In the midst of these agitating reflections, that night and day pursued him, like ill-omened spectres, the fact that love itself was fast retreating from ground so untenable, could no longer be disguised. Where was now the bright hope of sweet companionship gilding his future? Lying darkly overshadowed by images of usefulness impeded by diversity of aims; domestic comfort interrupted by discordant and vain repinings after unattainable pleasures; upbraidings, estrangements. Darker, darker grew the picture, till he could endure no more!

Then he would again seek relief in laying his penitence and grief before the eye of Him whose compassions

fail not, and whose wisdom alone could direct him in his tangled path. The idea of violating a compact so sacred as a betrothal he dared not yet admit. Now he was ready to bless the discretion of that church which has discountenanced the marriage of her sons till the fourth year of their ministry is ended. Surely before that time had elapsed some light would be vouchsafed to his earnest supplications.

Another long and faithful conversation with Rose before he left her, so wrought upon her impressible nature that with tears and demonstrations of affection she promised to conform to all his wishes. Could he have felt his former confidence in her stability, or even in her sincerity, his heart might again have yielded to its yearnings for its mate. But no, the tie had been forcibly sundered, never again to be reunited.

With faint hopes and gloomy forebodings, he again set off upon his round of duties. What might transpire before he should return to the neighborhood he dared not conjecture, but he derived some consolation from her promise, so freely given, not to make one of the guests at Mrs. McArthur's, and to decline as far as she could the particular attentions of Mr. Eldridge.

CHAPTER XXVI.

IN THE VORTEX.

"Thou tempted one! just entering
Upon enchanted ground;
Ten thousand snares are spread for thee
Ten thousand foes surround.
A dark and a deceitful band
Upon thy path they lower,
Trust not thine own unaided hand
To save thee from their power.
Cling—cling to Him whose mighty arm
Alone can shield thy soul from harm."

For several hours after Harry's departure, Rose almost imagined that her happiness had gone with him; but as she was to return to town that evening, insensibly her thoughts began to flow in their wonted channels, and her smiles to return. She used her utmost eloquence to induce Susan to accompany her, for with prophetic self-distrust she sought to strengthen by her presence that resolution which had so often been swept away by the tide of temptation.

Susan could not be persuaded. She longed for that retirement and communion with her own heart, so particularly needful after the late exciting circumstances, and a day or two thus spent decided her to occupy her time and thoughts in carrying out her plans for the comfort of her nurse.

With the advice and assistance of Mr. Austen, she found a house in the outskirts of the city, fortunately

not far from the route by which they usually passed in and out. It was small and quite in a dilapidated condition; but these disadvantages were overbalanced by its location in a tolerably large lot. This commended it to Susan's favor, because, as she remarked, it would be such a comfort to Patsey and her children, after having the range of the country to see a patch of green grass and even a garden around them; and perhaps Ben would have a holiday now and then when he could help them.

Mr. Austen smiled at this amiable idea, but said nothing. He knew that something was pressing heavily on her spirit, and gladly left her in the enjoyment of a hope that cheered her on in her benevolent project. At the same time he was well aware that Mr. Johnson was too much harassed by debt and habits of reckless extravagance to spare the services of his faithful slave even for a day.

The building they thought could be made neat and comfortable at a small expense so as to answer for the present, and by the fall, Susan thought she could economize her moderate income so far within her more moderate requirements as to increase its dimensions. Patsey would gladly take up her abode in it even in its present condition for the sake of being near her husband and her beloved Miss Susan.

After the purchase was completed, several days were occupied in doing all that could be done before spring to make it habitable, in receiving and arranging the few articles of furniture that Patsey claimed as special gifts from her mistress at the time of her marriage, and in replacing such as had been worn out or destroyed during her absence. Then came the grateful Patsey

herself with her children, and a joyful meeting it was.

Determined to make the occasion as happy as possible, Susan, supported by the presence of her brother, conquered her diffident reluctance, and in person obtained leave for Ben to be on the spot to receive them. The boon was rather ungraciously accorded, to be sure; but Mr. Johnson was a devoted admirer of ladies, and being taken by surprise, was overcome. Susan managed to drop in soon after the arrival, and was fully rewarded for all her pleasant cares by witnessing the result. The children could scarcely restrain their exuberant delight within the bounds of what their mother deemed a proper respect for their young mistress, while Patsey's overflowing eyes, and Ben's choking words of gratitude, were more than she could bear without some sympathetic emotion.

She very soon left them, and hastened home to pour out her acknowledgments to Him who had rewarded her simple effort to confer blessings on others by returning it a hundred fold into her own bosom. She had before experienced the truth of the words, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee." But now her heart felt lighter than it had for a long time, and could she but know that Harry was happy once more, she believed her remaining days would pass in as much quiet enjoyment as ordinarily falls to the lot of mortals.

She had seen little of Rose while so busily engaged preparing for Patsey, but now she had less excuse to decline her invitations. The more she saw of her, the more apparent it became that they could never again be united in affection as they had been in childhood. They

had been growing further apart from year to year, and now there was little in common. Rose was less aware of this fact than Susan, and as she could speak more unreservedly with her of Harry and her future prospects, she still sought her company. On this occasion some allusion being made to Mrs. McArthur, Rose laughed and said:

"Mrs. McArthur is sick, Susie, and her ball is deferred, so there will probably be time for Harry to give me another long lecture before the time of temptation."

"Is it still a temptation to you?"

"How can it be otherwise, when it is to be the most splendid thing of the kind that perhaps Baltimore has ever witnessed."

"But you do not even visit her now. Do you?"

"I have not for a long time, but I have a great mind to call rather than have the mortification of being left out."

"Rose, you would not surely do that?"

Rose passed her hand over Susan's earnest features, and laughed, but it was not with the natural tone of girlish glee—there was constraint about it that sounded harshly.

"Do not look so sanctimonious, Sue, at a mere jest. I have no intention of calling upon Mrs. McArthur. Indeed it would be entirely unnecessary, as she will do everything she can to induce me to be present."

"I am sorry to hear it."

"Why so?"

"Because it will strengthen the temptation."

"Thank you for the compliment," replied Rose, haughtily. "You must think I regard Harry's wishes very lightly."

"Forgive me, dear Rose. I did not think of offending you."

"I am not offended."

Susan was surprised at the cold manner in which this was said, and remembering Miss Edgeworth's rule—"In difficult cases, say nothing"—remained silent, till Rose, recovering her good humor and willing to change the subject, said:

"So you have bought a house for Patsey?"

"Yes, a small one," was the smiling reply.

"What a simpleton you are, not only to deprive yourself of so valuable a maid, but to impoverish yourself by setting her up in house-keeping. Do you expect she will ever be able to repay you one quarter part of the expense?"

"No, I have no expectation of it. I do not wish it."

"You astonish me. What, then, do you expect?"

"Only to teach her to take care of herself and the children, that they may be prepared for freedom hereafter."

"Well, I declare I had no idea you were so romantic. I cannot boast of being so good myself. Mother writes me that Aggy has taken it into her head to get married. But I cannot hear of such a piece of foolishness, she is altogether too young."

"Why, Rose, I thought Aggy was about your own age?"

"So she is, but I think there is a slight difference in our conditions. What can she expect if she marries Phil, but to have him sold away from her, as Ben has been from Patsey, and she may depend I shall not send her after him, and buy her a house to live in. Indeed

she is too useful to me for that. You cannot think what an excellent seamstress she is. I could not spare her, for I shall soon have so much for her to do."

"But if she is really attached to Phil?"

"Attached, indeed! Sue, you make me laugh. Then let her get attached to some of our own men, and perhaps I will give my consent after a few years."

Susan said no more, but thought she would manage to take Rose to Patsey's house some day, hoping that the sight of her happiness might touch her heart favorably for poor Aggy.

The next visit she made, Rose was just going out on a shopping excursion, and as Susan had some purchases to make, she offered to take her in the carriage. Rose demurred at first, making one excuse, then another, but finally concluded to go. She did not seem to have much to buy, and before Susan's business was concluded, remarked that she had an appointment to meet a friend, and would expect to find her when she returned home.

They parted, and when Susan returned to the carriage she found that her sister had directed the servant to leave a package at the house of a friend. Accordingly, they took that in their way. Just as they were turning off from the door, Susan chanced to cast her eyes further up the street, and to her great surprise saw Rose and a gentleman whom she instantly recognized as Mr. Eldridge, standing on the steps of Mrs. McArthur's house. Almost at the same moment the door opened, and they passed in together. So quickly did they disappear that for a moment she tried to believe herself mistaken. No; she had seen too clearly. It was none other than her misguided friend, and the very man against whose society she

had been so affectionately warned. She drove on to Mr. Munroe's, and then home, merely leaving a message for Rose, for how could she see her, and restrain her grief and indignation at such flagrant impropriety?

"Oh, Harry! if I could only save you from the misery that awaits you, what sacrifice would I not gladly make." These were her thoughts, and bitter ones they were, for she saw plainly that Rose was bent on a line of conduct that must inevitably end in a permanent rupture with her lover. The effect on him she dared not contemplate. Too well she knew the conflict necessary to subdue an affection placed upon an unattainable object. But what could be the object of Rose in thus receiving the attentions of Mr. Eldridge? And what could be his motive in rendering them? She knew that his suit had been rejected once; that Rose would never consent to marry a man who could offer neither wealth nor station to satisfy her ambition. She could not understand it.

After what seemed to Harry the longest and weariest round of four weeks that he had ever experienced, by means of a long and fatiguing ride, he again drew near to Baltimore a day earlier than he was expected. Some miles out, he found his horse had lost a shoe, and stepped into the village hotel while it was being replaced. Standing near a window, where he could watch the leisurely proceedings of the smith, he could not avoid hearing part of a conversation between two young men in another part of the room. They were laughing and talking gaily when he came in, and the first words that caught his ear were these:

"And did you notice the ecstatics he threw himself into while she was waltzing with that magnificent fellow from the South—Conway, I believe is his name. When

she sat down, she turned to him and said something about her dancing. It was enough to start him. You should have seen him as he pronounced the lines,

> "'Divinely through the graceful dance
> You seemed to float in silent song,
> Bending to earth that beamy glance,
> As if to light your steps along.'

A pretty good description, to be sure, for such a pair of glorious eyes I never saw."

"I did not hear that; but afterwards, when some stranger that had just come in asked who she was, he clasped his hands, exclaming, in the most pathetic tones, 'Ah, do you not know her? How I pity you! Ah, she is the star of my destiny. Ah!'"

The unmistakable "Ah!" sent a pang through Harry's heart. He turned to leave the room, but two ladies had planted themselves just in the doorway, and were engaged in an animated conversation. He then caught up a torn newspaper that lay upon the table, and tried to fix his attention on that, but as his eye glanced hurriedly along the columns, it fell upon a caption that instantly riveted his attention:

"THE MOST BRILLIANT FANCY BALL OF THE SEASON."

Impelled by an irresistible power, he stopped not till he had found the confirmation of his worst fears in the following paragraph: "By far the most resplendent star in the constellation, was the beautiful Miss C——r. From some cause unknown, she had for several months withdrawn her radiance from the gaze of her admirers. But on this favored occasion, she shone out with more

than wonted splendor. Who that was there can forget the brilliant and entrancing personation of Lalla Rookh and Feramorz—those Oriental lovers whose story has thrilled the world?"

Crushing the paper into his pocket, Harry moved towards the door with a step so decided, that the ladies instantly gave way. Once in the open air, he breathed again, but his temples still throbbed violently. He uncovered his burning brow to the frosty air, and walked up and down the long piazza till his horse was ready, then springing into the saddle, he set off at a rapid pace towards town.

Instead of going to the house of Mr. Munroe, as he had generally done of late, he went to that of Mrs. Rodney. That lady had been for some time increasingly alarmed at the headlong course pursued by her favorite. The fact of her withdrawing herself entirely from society, was very repugnant to her wishes, and she willingly lent her aid to bring her again into that circle where her remarkable charms of person would be appreciated, and reflect some of the lustre of their success upon her friends. But Rose had not the discretion or docility to stop where she was desired. The enchanted cup once at her lips, caution and restraint were unavailing. Often did Mrs. Rodney and Jessie remind her of the necessity of conforming in some degree to the known wishes of her future husband. She would parry all remonstrances, sometimes by laughing and promising that *this* party should be the last for a long time. Sometimes, in a less pleasant mood, she would declare that if she should now indulge Harry in all his Methodistical whims, he would, after they were married, feel himself licensed to play the tyrant on all occasions, and not suffer her to enjoy herself at all. She

must teach him that she had some rights as well as himself. But whether she laughed or frowned, she was equally unmanageable.

Still Mrs. Rodney trusted to the strength and ardor of youthful love to bind her nephew to his allegiance till the indissoluble seal was affixed. Then she doubted not all would be well. By that time there must be a change in his circumstances that would place them on a middle ground more in harmony with the tastes of both. Rose, as a wife, and in the country, would meet fewer inducements to immoderate pleasure seeking, while Harry, as the proprietor of such an estate as Hunter's Lodge, either in his own right, or acting for an infirm, paralytic old grandfather, must find enough to occupy his time and attention, without watching and censuring the gaieties of a beautiful wife.

Perhaps her thoughts might not have clothed themselves in language quite so definite; but reveries of a kindred nature floated through her brain and tended to allay her fears. In such meditations she was engaged, when a servant came to say that a gentleman was in the library, and desired to see her.

Without the slightest suspicion who she was to see, she obeyed the summons. Opening the door, she met Harry face to face, who, as usual when anything agitated him, was pacing up and down. The subject which had so recently occupied her thoughts, and in which he had figured so conspicuously, caused her to start, though she welcomed him affectionately. He took her hand, but did not speak. She saw that something had disturbed him, and Rose, with her imprudences, flashed into her mind; but as he turned towards the light, the change in

his appearance was so striking as to alarm her fears for his health.

"Why, Harry, my child, what is the matter with you? You look like the ghost of yourself. You must have been sick."

"I am sick now, Aunt Rodney, *heart-sick*, and have come to you in the hope that you can relieve me." Taking the crumpled paper from his pocket, he spread it before her, saying, as he pointed to the paragraph, "Tell me, if you can, that *that* does not mean Rose."

Mrs. Rodney had not seen the article before, and was completely silenced by surprise and vexation.

"You do not speak! Then it is true. I knew it to be so—and yet, like a drowning man, I caught at the straw of a possibility that it might mean another." And again he was traversing the length of the apartment with rapid steps.

"Harry, sit down and calm yourself. Let me talk to you. Believe me, I am as much taken by surprise as you are. But you look as if you had just got up from a fever. You must take a glass of wine."

Harry caught her hand in time to prevent her from ringing the bell, saying, "No. It would do me no good."

"Why, my dear, I know you never take anything of the kind, but I thought as a medicine"——

"Thank you, but I need nothing in that way. The truth is, I did not know how much I was leaning on a faint hope. That is now gone."

He stopped, and Mrs. Rodney resumed the subject.

"Harry, I beseech you not to be too severe in your judgment of a mere girlish indiscretion. Rose is very young. She will soon become satiated with these scenes

of festivity; and such girls often make the most sedate and excellent wives." She paused; but Harry said nothing. "I did not suppose for a moment that she would go to this ridiculous affair till Hunter told me she was there."

"Did cousin Elizabeth go?"

"No, she has not visited Mrs. McArthur for the last year. But, Harry, I know Rose would not have gone, if others had not persuaded her. She told me only last week that she was not going. You must overlook it this time. I dare say it will not happen again. Remember she is so young and so beautiful."

"Aunt Rodney, if Rose had never made a profession of religion—if she had not voluntarily renounced all these things, and promised to unite her future life with that of one whose principles and tastes she knew to be entirely opposed to them; but she"—— He stopped abruptly. He could not go on without exhibiting Rose as false to her word, and unworthy of the confidence of her most partial friends.

"But you do not surely consider going to a party, or occasionally dancing, a certain indication that a person is not a Christian."

"That question I am not now called upon to decide; but I do not doubt that our opinions, if compared, would be found very different on all points connected with such things. The question now is, whether Rose and I can ever harmonize in our views and habits of life, so as to be happy together. If she is not a Christian—I will go further—if her ideas of Christian character and conduct do not tally with mine, there can be no happiness for either of us."

"But, my dear Harry, no two persons can think ex-

actly alike; there must be mutual forbearance. Rose, as she grows older, may become as staid and matronly as you can desire. You should not expect it of her now."

"Aunt Rodney, I do not wish her to be staid and matronly now—it would be out of place. But would you have me marry a woman who is manifestly unsuited for the partner of a minister of the Gospel—one who must, in the course of his duty, instruct and caution others against the very vanities and follies which she is advocating by precept and example? If I had chosen Rose, and pledged to her my heart and hand, in her present character, the blame, the consequences, would have been mine, and it would have been my place to bear without complaint. But she is, as you know, entirely changed. What she then sought, she now avoids; what she then renounced, she now embraces. She has exhibited an instability of purpose, a vacillation of mind, a culpable yielding to the opinions of others—and those not the most worthy—that have shaken my confidence in her, to a degree that makes me tremble in view of the future."

"Oh, Harry! you look at trifles in too serious a light. When she is at a distance from these allurements they will lose their power over her. Think how long she has loved you. You will be able to guide her according to your own will."

"That is what I should least desire. I only ask that her principles of action should be derived from the only true source, the will of God; then there would be no necessity for the exertion of my will. I deprecate the misery of being compelled to govern a wife, and yet, if it should unhappily be necessary, I could not flinch

from using that authority which is, by the Divine Lawgiver, vested in the husband."

"Well, I must say you talk very unlike a lover; I should think you had been married ten years at least."

"And if lovers would more frequently extend their views half as far, there would not be so many miserable people in the world as there now are."

There was too much truth in the last remark to be controverted. After a long silence, Mrs. Rodney asked,

"What do you intend to do, Harry?"

"That is what I have not dared to think. But I would rather see my mother to-night than anything I know of."

"Oh, I beg your pardon. I entirely forgot to tell you, but there is a letter here for you, directed in her hand. It came yesterday."

Opening a drawer, she handed it to him, and saying she would expect him in the parlor before he went out, she moved towards the door.

"I shall not go out to-night. I will see Rose to-morrow."

"You are a strange fellow, certainly; but of course you will manage your own affairs your own way. At any rate you will come into the parlor, won't you?"

"I will if you will let me go to my room first for a while."

"Certainly, my dear child, do as you please about that. But you know, Elizabeth will not be willing to let me monopolize you.

Harry lost no time in opening his mother's letter, an exclamation of thankfulness burst from him when he found it contained the information that she would be in Baltimore the next evening. Mr. Temple, it appeared,

had written to Mr. Preston, and spoken of Harry's changed appearance, in such a way as to excite his paternal anxiety for him. He felt it his duty to lay the case before Mrs. Bradford. Harry's letters had in some degree enlightened her on the subject of the change in Rose, but of his own unhappiness he had said as little as possible. Now her tenderness for her son prompted her to hasten to the spot, that she might judge from personal observation of that which his unselfish love had forborne to make known.

Strengthened and comforted in the expectation of once more, and in such an important crisis of his life, opening his heart to that beloved mother, who, so far as human instrumentality was concerned, had formed that heart, Harry again committed the disposal of future events to Him who does not willingly afflict nor grieve the children of men, and then joined the family in the parlor.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE SIREN.

"Listen not to her—fly—avoid her sight;
Her words drop poison honeyed though they be;
And such her fascination—aye, she is
A very serpent, smooth, envenomed, cold—
Such are her spells, that in her evil presence
Wrong takes the hue of right, and that seems fair,
The doing which, will work us life-long woe."

Rose had said to Susan, that Mrs. McArthur would not require a call from her, but would do anything to secure her company at her house on the night of the grand fancy ball. The fact was, that gay and fascinating woman had recently received several decided slights from persons whose acquaintance would have contributed materially to shield her from the censures she was drawing upon herself by her incautious behavior.

Married at the early age of seventeen, before she knew she had a heart to bestow, to a man nearly twice her own age, she had gone immediately with him to Paris, where she spent several years. She rapidly acquired the grace and fascination which so often distinguish the women of that brilliant capital. But unfortunately with the charms, she also adopted their light opinions of conjugal duty. Without children to develop her better affections, she lived only for admiration. Every man who paid her any attention, she

viewed as another added to the list of her captives, and no lure was left untried to make him so.

She was willing to draw around her a bevy of fair girls for the sake of the picturesque effect, and she knew that when they had attracted admirers, she had only to cast the superior spell of her beguiling smile over them, and they were her slaves. Gladly would she have seen her rooms graced by the beauty of Rose, but pride would not suffer her to sue for the favor openly. A willing auxiliary however, presented in the person of the enamored Eldridge, who managed by flattery and obsequiousness to draw Rose into the snare. Still, though induced to call rather than lose the eclat of an invitation, she persuaded herself that that was all she wished.

Mrs. McArthur had heard rumors of her engagement, and after the acquaintance was once renewed, found no difficulty in drawing from Rose the cause of her declining to make one of her guests. It was not long before the present posture of affairs was communicated, and she at once assumed the office of confidential adviser. Again and again she cautioned the too credulous Rose against tamely submitting to be ruled in so tyrannical a manner, assuring her that it was only necessary to put on the appearance of coldness and displeasure to bring her rebellious subject to her feet, where she must keep him if she was not willing to make an entire surrender of her liberty. These were her lessons, but of course conveyed in language the softest and sweetest, that her pupil might not see too plainly whither they led. Under such tutorship, it is not wonderful that Rose found the attraction of the ball too strong for her to resist.

Among the various snares spread for the unwary feet

of Rose, was the renewal of her acquaintance with Mr. Conway, the brother of Mrs. McArthur, again on a visit from his home in Louisiana. At first he entreated his sister to excuse him from being present at her reception, as his attachment to Rose was still unconquered. At this she laughed, and asked if he really had so poor an opinion of himself as to yield the ground to a Methodist preacher, informing him, at the same time, of the disagreement already existing between the lovers, and her firm conviction that Miss Carter had too much sense thus to throw herself away. Mr. Conway's pride was still smarting under the sting of a refusal, where he believed he had reason to expect a very different answer to his suit, and it required more than one conversation with his wily sister to vanquish his reluctance to place himself again in danger.

Rose had not in so many words acknowledged that Harry opposed her acquaintance with Mrs. McArthur, but yet had failed to conceal it from the penetration of her questioner. A hint on such a point was sufficient to inflame the already irritated temper of that lady, and prompted her more than ever to promote the wishes of her brother. Shrewd and discriminating in character, she soon gathered from the communications of the infatuated Rose, that Harry was not to be driven into measures that he disapproved, and laid her plans accordingly. All succeeded to her satisfaction, for Rose, assured that jealousy was a powerful stimulant of love, not only attended the ball in costume as Lalla Rookh, but consented to receive attentions from Mr. Conway, whose assumed character of Feramorz, naturally brought them together, which with the artful encouragements of his sister, rekindled his hopes of final success.

The evening before Harry's arrival in Baltimore, Rose had gone with some of her young friends on a sleighing excursion, expecting to return the next day, but as often occurs, unforeseen obstacles prevented them from starting on their homeward trip as early as they intended, and finding that they could not get into town till a late hour of the night, they yielded to the entreaties of the friends they were visiting, and consented to remain till the next morning. Rose knew that by such an arrangement she could reach home in time for the usual day of Harry's visit, and willingly yielded to the proposal of her friends. Unfortunately, during the night the weather moderated, with a heavy fall of rain, which so washed the snow away, that when the gay party looked out in the morning, there was only bare ground for their runners. Here was an embargo, indeed. All that could be done was to wait till carriages could be brought from town. Consequently, when Harry went, as he proposed, to Mr. Munroe's the next morning, Rose had not returned. Somewhat disappointed, but immediately understanding the cause, he passed the remainder of the day among his friends, cheered and sustained by the hope of seeing his mother in the evening. When he again clasped that faithful friend to his breast, he felt as if half his troubles were gone.

Mrs. Rodney attended her niece to her room, where a short conversation on the immediate cause of the visit was held. Mrs. Rodney endeavored to plead for Rose, using about the same arguments that she did in her interview with Harry. Mrs. Bradford said little in return, for besides the difference of opinion between them, she was unwilling to make up her mind in any way till she had heard from her son a more clear elucidation of the

case than she could obtain from his letters. His appearance had fully justified the representations of Mr. Temple, and it was with equal impatience that both mother and son waited till courtesy permitted them to withdraw from the parlor together. The first expression of mingled feelings was a long and silent embrace. Then the mother raised her head from the bosom of her son, and looked at him in tearless grief, as she said,

"Oh, my beloved Harry, how much you have suffered!"

"I have, dear mother, and still do. But at present my liveliest emotion is gratitude to God, that I have just such a mother, and that she is here."

"It is indeed not the least of our mercies, my precious child, that we can come to each other in times of trouble. But tell me how you now stand in relation to Rose?"

"We are still engaged."

"How is she now? Does she appear tender and sorrowful for the past, or how is it?"

"Oh, mother, I see no reason to believe she ever was a Christian."

"How can that be, Harry?"

"She thinks herself that it was all a delusion, that her fears were excited by the representations of her friends, and then the removal of those fears by the promises and encouragements that were presented, made her imagine herself changed and safe, and consequently happy."

"But could that alone be sufficient to kindle so much zeal in the cause of the Redeemer?"

"I cannot understand it, but she says it was her affection for me that misled her."

"Have you still confidence in her affection?"

"I had till recently no doubt of it."

"What leads you now to doubt it?"

"Well, some circumstances that transpired while we were last at Aspen Grove first awakened the suspicion, and subsequent events have confirmed it."

"And is it the supposed loss of her affection, my poor child, that has thus reduced you to the shadow of yourself?" and tears filled her eyes as she passed her hand fondly over his cheek, scarcely less pale than her own.

"That has done its part, dear mother, it cannot be denied, but by no means the heaviest. I might have borne that with the help of grace, and outlived it, I suppose, as many others have done before me; though if she had been taken from me while she still appeared as she did when I first loved her, it would have been a grief that I should have taken to my grave. But oh, mother! to think of myself, by my own rash inconsiderate haste, united for life to a woman who seems to cast off even the outward appearance of religion; and that I should have done so in spite of all your advice and warnings and those of Brother Preston too, fills me with most painful self-condemnation. If the engagement should be consummated, how can I ever expect to hold up my head among ministers. Oh, mother! it is hard to bear, but I have no one to blame but myself."

"I cannot quite agree with you there, my son. But do you expect to continue this engagement, if you have reason to doubt her love to you?"

"Not if that doubt should be confirmed. You know I wrote to you, that she had promised to give up her acquaintance with Mrs. McArthur, and yet, after all, she went to that ball with Eldridge; she appeared and

danced in a fancy dress. Oh, mother, what a wife for a preacher!"

He then gave her the paper containing the notice of her appearance. Mrs. Bradford read it over carefully, and then said: "My dear Harry, comfort yourself. She will never be your wife. If she could thus outrage your feelings, as well as Christian and feminine propriety, she does not love you. If you can bear the separation, you need not fear for her."

Harry covered his face and groaned.

"What is it that affects you so deeply, Harry? Can you still love one so unworthy?"

"Oh, mother, I cannot yet unravel the mystery of my feelings. I certainly love what I thought she was, and cannot entirely separate the character from the person. But oh, to be united by a bond so sacred, so tender, and yet no love on either side. How dreadful!"

"It would indeed be dreadful if it should continue. But it will not. I am much more concerned, lest the tie should be broken before you are prepared to meet the shock."

"But, my dear mother, I thought if I was sure of anything it was her love. I cannot believe she will seek to be released."

"Time will show. I only hope you may not suffer more than she will."

In this way they continued to converse for a long time, and before they stopped, Mrs. Bradford had learned the leading particulars of the alarm about the dog, though so far as he could, Harry spared the revelation of utter selfishness exhibited by Rose, after they all returned home. It was, however, enough to place the part acted by the two girls in strong contrast by no

means favorable to Rose. It also furnished Mrs. Bradford with some gleams of sunshine with which to gild the future of her beloved son. She treasured them up in silence, but felt a renewed hope of the final accomplishment of her long cherished and reluctantly abandoned hopes for him.

As she sat in profound thought, and looking very serious, Harry started up, saying: "How selfish I have been, sweet mother, to forget that you must be very tired with your long ride."

"Do not accuse yourself, dear child; I could not have slept till I learned all these particulars, and scarcely feel any fatigue now, such supremacy has the mind over the body. But I suppose it is best that we should both go to rest. Bring your Bible, dear, mine is not unpacked."

Harry brought it from his room, and putting it into her hands, said: "Indulge me to-night, dear mother. Let me imagine myself once more a simple happy child, if I can, in listening to your voice in prayer."

Mrs. Bradford took the book, and after turning over the leaves a moment, read a Psalm. Then kneeling side by side, as in days long past, she offered up their evening supplications. The soft feminine tones, the pleading tenderness of her words, like the breath of spring upon the wintry earth, warmed his chilled heart, and sent the life-blood in more genial currents through his frame. She prayed for him, as only a mother can pray for a darling child pressed down under the weight of his first grief, and he calmly responded. But when she prayed for Rose—his poor deluded Rose—his heart melted, and tears, such as never disgrace the cheek of manhood, attested the sincerity with which he joined

in every petition for her present and eternal salvation.

Rising from his knees, he once more folded his mother to his bosom, pressed a long kiss upon her lips, and left the room.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE FAMILY COMPACT ANNULLED.

"The last link is broken
That bound me to thee,
And the words thou hast spoken
Have rendered me free."

THE reflections of Rose, after the wild excitement of the ball had subsided, were far from comfortable. She could not exclude the haunting fear, that should it become known to Harry, with all its aggravating circumstances, he would no more believe her protestations of affection or her promises of abstaining from scenes and associations so directly opposed to his wishes. Perhaps he would renounce her forever. He had never been the same since the evening of the little company at Mrs. Rodney's. She must bring him back. She must, at least for the present, give up some of her darling pleasures. She must restrict her visits to Mrs. McArthur to an occasional call, and as soon as his appointment was changed, as it probably would be at conference, she would listen to her mother's oft-repeated entreaties, and return to Gaywood. It would be horribly dull and prosy, to be sure, but the gay season in town would be nearly over, and then the country would be more endurable.

But even this false and imperfect plan of reformation was scarcely formed, when she received an unceremonious visit from Mrs. McArthur. With her usual flattering

professions, she contrived to insinuate herself completely into the confidence of the vain girl, and bring her under the guidance of another spirit. Veiling real designs, under a tender regard for her happiness, she remonstrated against the course of conduct she had resolved to adopt, as the surest way to mar the future bliss of both.

"Think, my sweet girl," she said, taking her hand with a winning smile, "think of so fine a fellow as this Harry of yours—handsome, talented, eloquent, as I am told he is—thrown away, absolutely thrown away, among barbarians who can never perceive his rare gifts, and taking you, my fair Rose-bud, to waste your sweetness on the desert air! Oh, no, it must not be. You should protest against such a loss to refined and appreciating society. You owe it to him, to yourself, to your friends, now in the day of your power, to resist such unheard of tyranny. Do not believe for a moment that you can fail if you manage judiciously. Mr. Bradford would make any sacrifice of mere habit, rather than lose such a prize. And what can it be but mere habit, formed by early education, that has thus perverted his taste in this matter, and caused him to choose such a barbarous kind of life. You must not give way an inch. Depend upon it, after you have once induced him to yield to your wishes, he will see what a delusion he has been under, and be grateful to you as long as he lives."

"But you have no conception how strong his prejudices are in favor of the kind of life he has adopted. He will argue me out of all my preconceived opinions."

"And what are proud man's arguments against such weapons as you can bring to the contest? Ah, my love, you do not know them. Yes, they will argue. It is in that way they all, even the best of them, take advantage

of our tender hearts. They know our sensibilities are so keen that we cannot bear to contend with those we love; and yet, believe me, if we put on an appearance of coldness and indifference, they will, if they really love, consent to anything we ask. They often make a brave show of resistance at first; but, as I said, if they really love, as you, enchanting creature, must be loved by any one who has not a heart of ice, they could not have the cruelty to inflict such a fate as this which is threatened you. A man must be nothing short of a veritable Turk to think of shutting you up from all the innocent enjoyments of refined life. Ah, how different from one that I know"—here she gracefully touched her eyes with her embroidered handkerchief. "If it depended upon him to make your life happy or miserable, he would rejoice to sacrifice even life itself to secure the gratification of your slightest wish. But what am I saying! Oh, forgive me. My feelings carry me beyond the bounds of discretion. Forget it, most lovely Rose; but for the sake of your own future peace—yes, and that of him who is ennobled by being the envied object of your priceless love—do not, I entreat you, forget the warnings of one who loves you as a sister, though she must never call you by that endearing name."

With tender embraces, and habitually obedient tears, she then bade farewell to her "beautiful friend," leaving her completely duped, and wondering how Harry could be so blind as not to admire so charming a creature.

With a sorrowful heart, but determined purpose, Harry found himself in the parlor of Mr. Munroe, at an hour too early for interruption from fashionable callers. Notwithstanding the lessons Rose had received from Mrs. McArthur, when she came into the room, the first sight

of Harry put them all to flight, and she sprang forward to meet him with much of the unaffected joy that used to overflow the hearts and sparkle in the eyes of both on such occasions. But she was instantly recalled to a sense of the reality of their present position by Harry's manner. Disregarding her evident expectation of a more affectionate reception, he lightly touched his lips to her brow, and stood gravely looking down upon her.

Could he have heard of the ball? Her eyes fell and the conscious blush dyed her cheek. But quickly remembering her lesson, she linked her arm in his, and drew him to a sofa, as she said playfully,

"Come, my recreant knight, give an account of yourself to your lady-love. Where have you been these long four weeks?"

Harry hesitated—but the question needed no answer, and he gave none. With the simple directness of his character, he proceeded to the more important object of his visit.

"Rose, I have come to see you this morning, to remonstrate with you on the course of life you are still pursuing, even after your promise to turn away from it."

"Indeed, that is a singular coincidence, for I have condescended to give you this audience to remonstrate with you on the very absurd course of life you choose to pursue."

"Rose, I can neither understand nor join in this trifling."

"Indeed? Then I will even explain myself. You did not tell me, but I have learned, that when you were in Virginia, Col. Hunter proposed to you to come home to the Lodge, and take the entire management of the place. Now, how can you refuse to do this, when it is so plainly your duty to accept the offer?"

"Simply, because I do not consider it my duty to accept it. Willie's health, I am happy to say, continues to improve, and they have an overseer, a faithful, upright man, who is as well qualified to carry on the farm as I should be."

"Harry Bradford!" exclaimed Rose, fast losing, with the assumed gaiety of her manner, all recollection of the part she was to perform, "are you determined to refuse every request I make—to do nothing for my gratification—but to insist upon my relinquishing my friends, my home, everything that is dear to me, for you?"

"No, Rose, I have no such intention."

"Then, since you have been so infatuated as to reject this opportunity of providing a suitable home for me, you are at least bound not to insist upon degrading yourself and me by this low, miserable circuit-riding."

"You have not always viewed it in that light."

"I have; and would rather have gone to some foreign mission, than have submitted to it."

"And was that your only motive, unhappy girl, for urging me to become a missionary?"

"No, it was not; for I then thought you loved me, and in that delusion I preferred it. It would have detained you at a distance, till you were recalled to take possession of your estate. Neither do I deny that I was for a short time so blinded by the fanaticism that was forced upon me at camp-meeting, as to think I was actuated by religious zeal. But I soon found out that it was a very different motive."

She paused, and glanced at her auditor, expecting an inquiry as to the nature of that different motive, but he sat with his eyes cast down, his brow contracted, and lips firmly closed in silence.

Meeting no answer, she continued in a more conciliatory tone: "If you will now ask for a location, and live as a gentleman should, I will be satisfied." She waited for an answer. It came not, but as a tremulous motion of the relaxing mouth gave her some encouragement, she put her hand upon his arm, and in her most subduing tones added: "Then, you know, you can preach as much as you please. I see you are in deep consideration, but it need not take long to decide a point that will make your Rose so happy. Come, let me see you smile. Any one possessing such splendid teeth as you have, should smile all the time."

This was trifling indeed, and most discordant to the wounded heart of Harry. He rose up, and took several turns through the room, before he could command his voice to reply.

"Rose, it is useless to say any more on that subject. You know all I would say. But I would ask you, what could induce you to violate your promise, so freely given, not to renew your acquaintance with Mrs. McArthur?"

"Because I ought never to have made such a promise. It was in the highest degree unjust to a most lovely and deeply injured woman."

"Is it your determination to continue this course till you incur the mortification of a censure from the church?"

Indignation and contempt flashed from her eyes as she replied: "I have saved the *brethren* that trouble, by withdrawing some time ago."

"Oh, Rose! can it be possible? Then you are no longer enrolled among the friends of Jesus."

"There are other churches in the world. When I am ready, I shall join the Episcopal church."

"Poor child! Do you expect to be received by the devoted Dr. James while you are the bond-slave of the world and its delusive pleasures?"

"There are other ministers besides Dr. James too, in the world; and I do not like your language—a bond-slave, indeed!"

"Forgive the seeming harshness of the expression for the sake of its solemn and melancholy truth. We are all bond-slaves till we are made free by the redemption that was wrought out by Christ. You say, when you are ready. May the Lord, in his mercy, make you ready in his own way, my poor Rose, by cleansing you in the atoning blood of Christ, and by a thorough regeneration of soul and spirit."

Rose was startled by the solemn sadness of these words, and fearing that she was losing the advantage so important for her to gain, she drew close to Harry's side, and again laying her jewelled fingers upon his arm, threw into her attitude and eyes that melting softness which had often witched away his graver mood, saying,

"When you are an Episcopal minister, dear Harry, I will join your church."

But the witchery had lost its power, and he perceptibly drew back as he replied:

"That will never be, Rose. As a Methodist itinerant preacher I gave myself to you. In that character you were willing to take me." He stopped. A vision of the past came over him. He almost heard the words, "I can—I will." But it was gone, and laying his hand on hers, while his features quivered with emotion, he resumed:

"Oh, Rose, is it indeed too late? Must the sweet promise of that hour fade away in gloom forever? Oh,

say you will again be the humble Christian you then appeared, by any name, and we can yet be happy, even on a circuit."

The last words, "*on a circuit*," annihilated whatever of softness was induced by his affecting allusion to the past. All her love, all her blandishments gave way; even the instructions of her artful monitress were forgotten in the anger that burned in her bosom at this unyielding obstinacy, as she considered it. Starting from his detaining hand, she stood erect and defiant before him.

"Do you say that you will make not the smallest sacrifice for my sake? Do you say that you will neither leave the Methodist church nor take a location?"

"It is impossible for me to do either."

For one moment she struggled with overwhelming, contending emotion. She struggled and she conquered. No clinging womanly tenderness now gave promise of relenting. No tear now dimmed the splendor of her flashing eye, as in a voice sharp and unnatural the words burst forth,

"Then our engagement is ended. I will never sink to the degradation of a circuit rider's wife."

And before Harry could recover from the shock of her excited words, looks, and gestures, she was gone.

CHAPTER XXIX.

RECOVERED FREEDOM.

"Fare thee well, my path is lonely,
Winding up the mountain top;
Shadows wrap me, I can only
Still press on in faith and hope.
Though around me storms are surging,
Yet yon mountain peak is bright;
Soon from all this gloom emerging,
I shall reach that glorious height."

After vain efforts on the part of Mrs. Bradford to while away the time of her son's absence in the company of her aunt and cousin, she retreated to her own room, and there awaited, in anxious, prayerful solicitude, his return. At last she heard him come up-stairs, go into his room and turn the lock. Curbing her impatience as well as she could, she still waited till he came to her door.

The first glance at his face revealed an expression that comforted her. She could not perfectly understand it, but the rigid lines of care, too deep and corroding for his years, were softened, and a faint smile, indicative of inward peace, had taken their place. He threw his arms around her, as in low but emphatic tones he spoke the words, "Mother, I am free."

A fervent thanksgiving was the only answer, and for a long time nothing more was said. Seeing him look so pale and exhausted, she placed the sofa cushions behind

him, and begged him to lie down. He obeyed, for it seemed easier to yield than to speak. Mrs. Bradford sat and watched him, hoping he would fall asleep, but his eyes were too full of thought.

"What is now your most prominent feeling, my son?" she asked.

"Thankfulness," was the firm reply.

"Forgive me, my dear child, if my anxious questions annoy you; but let me ask you, if that is so, why this paleness, this evident prostration?"

"I cannot tell myself, dear mother, unless it is that I am like one who has just survived some terrible surgical operation, on which life depended. I feel the effects of it, but I trust that I shall, now that the crisis is past, begin to recover. I will not long indulge this unmanly weakness, but by giving way to it a short time, with you alone, I shall be better prepared to master it hereafter."

"I doubt not that you are right, my dear Harry, and I am now satisfied."

After an interval of perfect quietness, Harry arose strengthened in mind and body. He gave his mother the more important points of his conversation with Rose, and both united in mourning the dangerous course she had entered upon, but at the same time rejoiced in the termination of that engagement which, if consummated, could only have insured the misery of both.

It was not long before Mrs. Rodney, who had only been detained thus long by company, came up to hear about the reconciliation which, she had not the slightest doubt, had followed a short lovers' quarrel. When the real result of the interview was communicated, she first, in the vehemence of her grief and disappointment,

blamed Harry for what she chose to consider his unnecessary strictness, even insisting that he must have been very stern and unamiable to have driven Rose to such extreme measures. Then as she looked at him and noticed the patient sadness with which he bore her rebukes, the impulsive current of feeling turned, and she took encouragement from his evident suffering. Hope sprung up that harmony could yet be restored.

"My poor Harry," she said, looking at him with softening eyes, "I know you are almost broken-hearted too. The truth is, you have both been in fault, and so I shall tell Rose. Do not look so wretched, my dear child, it will all be made up again, I am confident. Why should two hearts so sweetly united be torn asunder? There is no necessity for it. Rose has been very giddy and thoughtless, but I have not a doubt, the dear girl is now overwhelmed with sorrow for having displeased you. You must be willing to make some concessions, Harry, and I will venture to say she will more than meet them."

She paused and looked at her nephew. He only shook his head, and she resumed:

"Do not be so desponding, Harry, that is not like you. Depend upon it this is only a temporary cloud, that will make the succeeding sunshine all the brighter. I shall see Rose at once."

"Dear Aunt Rodney, I feel the kindness of your intentions, but I beg you to forbear saying any more. You only wound where you intend to heal. The sentence has gone forth, and it is irreversible."

"So I am aware a multitude of lovers have said before, my dear. But we shall see. Sophy, you do not say a word. Why do you not interpose?"

"Because, dear aunt, I think Harry is capable of con-

ducting so delicate an affair himself, better than any one can do it for him."

"I am not so sure of that, but you should not let him be so distrustful. Do try and cheer him up. I will see you again soon."

She rose to leave the room, but Harry followed her to the door, "Aunt Rodney, this engagement cannot be renewed. I caution you not to attempt it."

"Harry, you speak from the impulse of feeling that must subside. Offended pride may sustain you for a while, but it cannot hold out."

"Dear Aunt Rodney, be persuaded to listen to me. I have no wish to renew the engagement. I cannot consent to it."

"Oh, Harry, you talk just as thousands have done before. Forgive me, my dear boy, if I now seem officious, but you will thank me for it yet," and refusing to be longer detained she hurried away.

This pertinacity was very annoying to both Mrs. Bradford and Harry, but they well knew the strength of her ruling passion, and that to her the marriages of the family were events of the greatest moment, and should, like those of royalty, be contracted by the higher powers.

She found Rose drowned in tears, and easily gathered from what she said in the intervals of her paroxysms of grief, that she expected Harry to come and sue for a reversal of his sentence. At first she had determined to decline seeing him for several days. Then, as hour after hour passed without bringing even a message from him, she descended a little from her lofty stand, and thought it would perhaps be as well to see him, and regulate her behavior according to the measure of his contrition.

When Mrs. Rodney came, and brought no overtures of pacification, she began to take the alarm, and gave way to bitter self-upbraidings for her violence, though still rather inclined to blame Harry for being so easily repulsed. She listened to the animadversions of Mrs. Rodney on her past reckless behavior, acknowledged she had gone too far, and was again willing to make peace on any terms.

After due consultation with Mr. Munroe and Jessie, it was decided that the only way was to induce Harry to see her, and leave the result to the interview, confident that any man of ordinary humanity must yield to the power of so much beauty in tears, and equally confident that a reconciliation would confer as much happiness on the one as on the other.

Only such points as it was supposed would tend to promote that desirable end were presented to Harry, but, to his aunt's consternation, he remained inflexible. No arguments, no entreaties, no reproaches could induce him to take a step that might again involve him in the snare, from which he considered himself providentially rescued. He said he should write to Rose, and with this concession alone, the good lady was obliged, in high displeasure, to leave him, her mission unaccomplished, and all her favorite schemes dashed to the ground. She constantly visited Rose, and by her endeavors to console, unwittingly furnished her with more encouragement than there was ground for. Again and again she renewed her efforts to change the fixed purpose of her nephew, but all in vain, and she saw him depart with his mother for Aspen Grove, without having advanced one step towards the attainment of her object.

Harry was to preach at Oak Hill, and then finish his

last round on the circuit before conference. His mother was to stay till after that period. Not knowing to what part of the field her son would be sent, or how long it might be before they could meet again, she wished to secure every opportunity of seeing him. During his absence she divided her time between the country and city. She saw Rose frequently, and did all she could to soften the anger that was again taking place of more tender feelings, representing, as carefully and kindly as she could, the impossibility of happiness for either while their views of life were so opposed.

Mrs. McArthur was constantly at the ear of the poor girl, pouring in soft flatteries, and cautiously at first expressing her pity, then more boldly, her indignation that any one could thus for one hasty word, spoken under the strongest provocation, resign the possession of so lovely a creature. Then, in contrast, she would allude to *him* who would peril life itself to obtain that which another resigned so coldly. At last she induced her to pass a day at her house, where of course she met Mr. Conway. The ardor of his passion had in no degree cooled, and though by the advice of his more circumspect sister, he forbore to press his suit for the present, every word and look betrayed its existence to Rose, tending to heal her wounded pride and vanity if not partially to supersede the image of her unrelenting lover by his own. She had never felt that true womanly devotion to one object that would have caused her to shrink from receiving the open manifestation of passionate affection from another. Very soon it became apparent that she was ready to find consolation in scenes of gaiety and fashion as well as in the homage of those who were ready to render it.

Harry had written to Mrs. Carter before he left Bal-

more, stating as tenderly as he could, consistently with truth, the dissolution of that engagement which had been a source of so much congratulation among the different members of the family. Mrs. Rodney and Jessie had also written their own views of the same subject. The immediate effect of these communications was to bring Mrs. Carter to town, and then, with the concurrence of Mr. and Mrs. Munroe, though against the wishes of Mrs. Rodney, to decide her to take her reluctant daughter with her on her return to Virginia.

Mrs. Bradford spent a week with the Austens and her beloved Susan, in the country. She visited Patsey, witnessing and enjoying her happiness and that of her children, in their little home, and entering with affectionate interest into all the benevolent and judicious plans of their youthful mistress.

CHAPTER XXX.

A PARTNERSHIP.

"Be thou a man! man's nobleness revering;
Be free! and aid thy brother to be free;
Crush not the oppressed, thy better feelings searing;
Keep heart and mind from all impurity."

FROM THE GERMAN.

HARRY returned from his circuit before he expected to do so, urged by his kindly apprehensive colleague to take the remainder of the time till conference to rest and recruit. The advice was thankfully accepted by Harry, who was at last made to feel that mind and body are too intimately associated for one to suffer alone, though he only now consented through the inducement of his mother's company to help in passing away the idle time. In that view, it was a source of great enjoyment to both.

No circumstances could have been more favorable for Harry to recover a healthy tone of mind than those surrounding him at Aspen Grove. The refined, intelligent and Christian society always to be found at Mrs. Austen's fireside, kept his mind in a pleasant state of excitement without inducing fatigue. Nothing now marred the satisfaction he took in watching the mutual affection of his mother and Susan. He thought he had never seen either of them appear to greater advantage. Away from the contagious despondency of her father, cheered

by Willie's steadily improving health, and blessed with her son's society, as well as that of other long-loved friends, Mrs. Bradford had never, since her widowhood, seemed to Harry so free from care, so like the bright mother of his childhood.

Susan, too, was changed. Whether it was the result of the successful accomplishment of her plans for Patsey or the pleasure of having his mother with her, he could not tell, but she often reminded him of the little joyous Lily that used to frolic around him with his own sweet sister and Willie, before death or disease had claimed their victims. With the same delicate tact that had intuitively directed her even in early childhood, she now adapted herself to his varying mood. Either gay and sportive, grave and rational, or gentle and sympathizing, it seemed as if she and his mother had entered into an amiable conspiracy against his sadness, which not unfrequently yielded to their combined influence. Only when the thought would force itself upon him, "Oh, that my poor Rose had been reared and formed by such a mother as Mrs. Allington!"—then the past, despite his resolution to the contrary, cast its shadow over him, and sent him to find in solitude and prayer his ægis of strength.

The origin of Susan's brighter spirits was not to be found in any principle of selfishness. It was in part owing to the causes assigned by Harry, but still more to the unaffected joy she felt at seeing him released from the dreaded evils of an uncongenial marriage. So completely had all hope for herself been extinguished by his engagement to Rose, that even his present freedom from the tie had not the power to rekindle its embers, so carefully guarded by humility and Christian integrity. It was enough that he was not to be the husband of a

selfish votary of fashion, whose main spring of action was her thirst for universal admiration, and a life of luxurious self-indulgence. He was now free to pursue the career of usefulness upon which he had so auspiciously entered, in which she was willing to see him shining at a distance, and rejoice in his light. Of a second attachment she could not even conceive.

When the time came for Mrs. Bradford to return to her aunt's, Susan, who had some little business to attend to for Patsey, accompanied her in the carriage. Harry wished to take his horse to town, and preferring that mode of conveyance, rode on in advance.

When the ladies reached the little cottage, so late the abode of grateful contentment, they were met at the door by Patsey, who bursting into tears and lamentations, begged them to come in. Quickly entering, they inquired what was the cause of this deep affliction. She told them that Ben had been in for a few moments the day before, and said that Mr. Johnson was in a very bad humor about something, he did not know what, but that it was impossible to please him by anything he could do; that once he had used very threatening language, and at last grumbled out something about selling him. She said he had not been at home all night; and being frightened about him, she had gone into town, in the morning, to see what was the matter. Mr. Johnson was very cross, would give her no information about her husband, but drove her from the door. She had sent her eldest girl to tell her Miss Susan about it, but as she took a short cut across the fields, she supposed she did not see the carriage.

Here was a change indeed; and what was to be done? Both ladies said what they could to comfort the poor

creature, hoping that she was needlessly alarmed. Still, from the character and habits of Ben's master, there was enough to justify the worst apprehensions. They immediately promised to do all they could to avert the calamity, should it be even as Patsey feared, and were just turning from the door, when Ben himself appeared.

The poor fellow looked wretched indeed; and as soon as he saw them, run forward and threw himself on his knees, crying, and entreating them, in the utmost distress, to buy him. They tried to console him, by assurances that they would do all that could be done for him, if he would control himself so as to let them understand what the difficulty was. By this time, Patsey and the children had joined their cries and groans to his, so that it was no easy matter to get a connected account.

Finally, they gathered that Mr. Johnson's words were no empty threat. Ben was to be sold at the end of three days. If he could find a master to suit him by that time, very well; but if he could not, he would wait no longer, but take the business into his own hands, and make quick work of it. Fearing the poor fellow would make his escape, Mr. Johnson had shut him up in jail all night, and only consented to let him out on the security offered by the preacher in charge of the Sharp street station, where he had been a member since he came to Baltimore.

No time was to be lost, so bidding Patsey keep up as well as she could for the sake of the children, who hung crying about her, and again promising to save Ben, if possible, they took him on the seat with the driver, and hastened to town.

Both felt that Harry was the one whose counsel and assistance must be first sought. If he would undertake

the management of the case, they believed some way would be found for the rescue of poor Ben.

He did not disappoint their expectations. The sight of poor Ben's distress would have been enough to enlist his warmest sympathy, if there had been no more. But when he met the mute eloquence of Susan's tearless eyes, and assisted his mother in supporting her almost fainting form into the house, he did not need to be reminded, to stimulate him to effort, that she had exposed her delicate person to the fangs of a furious animal to warn him from the same danger, but felt, with a glow of happiness to which he had long been a stranger, that it might be in his power to avert this calamity, and thus pour the balm of consolation into many bosoms.

Susan was taken to Mrs. Bradford's room, and induced to lie down on a lounge, not only by the assurance on the part of Harry that he would use the greatest diligence to ward off the evil, but also from perfect inability to sit up. The suddenness of this misfortune, threatening as it did to sweep away all the little fabric of Patsey's happiness, and much of her own with it, came over her with a shock which she could scarcely resist.

Harry called his mother out for a short consultation, and then departed on his mission of humanity. When Mrs. Bradford returned, her eyes were full of tears, but tears so illumined by smiles, that Susan felt her hopes rising as she said:

"What is it, dear Mrs. Bradford? You look as if something favorable had struck your mind."

"I am sorry, my sweet girl, if I have misled you by my fond weakness. It is only that I have such perfect confidence in Harry. Be comforted, dear; if human

means can avail, Ben will be the gainer by the exchange of masters."

Susan did not look as if she had less of that confidence, while for the first time a tear made its way through her closed eyelids, and hung on her dark lashes till pushed off by another. How many more there might have been after she turned her face away, and bestowed them upon the pillow, Mrs. Bradford knew not, but she thought of the lines:

> "When the tear, soft and silent, steals down from the eye,
> Take no note of its course nor detect the low sigh;
> From some spring of soft sorrow it trembllngly flows,
> Some tender remembrance, that weeps as it goes."

She let the feeling have its way, whatever it was, and when Susan again looked up, it was with perfect self-possession, and each tried to assume all the cheerfulness she could muster, for the comfort of the other.

Still the hours dragged heavily along. Mrs. Rodney and her daughter were kind and attentive, but of course all waited impatiently for Harry's return. At dinner-time, instead of coming himself, he sent a messenger with a note to his mother, containing these words:

"DEAREST MOTHER:

"All hopeful thus far. We had a long search for Mr. Johnson, but found him in time to be before any other purchaser. The prospect is good. Keep up good heart, and cheer the drooping Lily. I hope to see you in an hour or two.

"HARRY."

Within the specified time he was at his mother's door, asking admittance, which was joyfully accorded. His

radiant smile, as he held out a hand to each, was eloquent of success before he could speak the words. "It is done. Ben is safe." Then with a glance of intelligence at his mother, he asked if a friend that he had left in the hall could come in a moment. Susan scarce heard him, so absorbed was every faculty in the certainty that Ben was safe. She looked her gratitude to Harry, for words she had none, and was fully understood. Before she could control her beating heart enough to speak, Ben himself stood before her, making a most liberal display of ivory, and eyes fairly dancing with ecstasy. Again the words died upon her trembling lips, and entirely overcome she hid her face on the bosom of Mrs. Bradford, who, smiling tenderly upon the emotion she so largely shared, had yet the power to ask what both longed to hear. Was Ben really safe? and who had bought him?

It was now Harry's turn to hesitate; but the pause was brief, for Ben so far forgot his manners as to take the floor himself.

"Oh, Miss Susan, you ha'n't heerd the best of it. Please, miss, just look up a moment, and let me tell you, 'cause I must go right off to Patsey—poor creter, she's jist breaking her heart now, I s'pose," and quite transported out of his habitual deference, he clapped his hands and added, "Never mind, honey, I'm coming to make you shout for joy. Ah, dat's right, miss; now look," and pointing to Harry, with exulting emphasis, "Dar's my master, thank de Lord. And won't I serve him faithfully? Ah, dat I will. Thank de Lord. And now I am going, if you please, massa."

"Yes, go now, Ben, and tell Patsey all about it."

"I'se going, sir, thank ye. And Miss Susan, and Mrs.

Bradford, ma'am—my master has lent me his horse, so I can get dar quick."

Then with a flourishing bow all round, and an extra grin of gratitude towards Harry, he departed.

Harry sat down, and all three were silent. Susan's introduction to Ben's new master had been entirely too much for her overwrought feelings, and she still hid her face in Mrs. Bradford's arms, whose eyes rested first on one, then on the other, with almost equal affection and joy. Wishing to screen the embarrassment she could well understand, she told her son that he had better go and inform his aunt and cousin of the favorable result of his mission, and then he must come again and let them hear all the particulars. He instantly took the hint and run down stairs.

After a few loving words from her friend, Susan looked up. "Oh, Mrs. Bradford," she said, "how weak, as well as ungrateful, I must appear, not to have said one word of thanks; but indeed I feel too much for words."

"Do not be troubled, dearest. Harry is perfectly satisfied; he understands your feelings."

Susan fervently hoped he did not, and that thought nerved her to struggle against her emotion. She bathed her eyes, and smoothed her hair, so that when Harry returned she was able to express a small part of her gratitude, as she thought, blunderingly and imperfectly, but in the opinion of others, gracefully and impressively.

"Do not thank me, dear Lily. You ought rather to thank yourself for the example you set me in providing so judiciously for Patsey's welfare and future freedom. I am only trying to imitate you. If Ben proves himself capable of taking care of himself and his family, as I believe he will, he shall have his freedom when Patsey

has hers. With that prospect only could I have consented to purchase him."

A long conversation ensued, in which the capabilities and resources of Ben and Patsey were canvassed at large. Finally, it was agreed that Ben should at once take up his abode at the little cottage, do what he could towards the repairs, and get the ground in order for a garden. Then, as the season advanced, and there was less required about home, he was to hire himself as waiter, porter, or whatever presented. Patsey had already obtained the washing of several persons, and their joint labor, with careful management, it was expected would keep them in comfort.

Ben's abounding gratitude at first felt disappointed that he was not to be retained in immediate attendance upon the person of his new master. The idea of being at home with his family was something he had never aspired to, and he scarcely knew how to receive such indulgence. But the stimulus of promised freedom gave a spring to every faculty, and he surprised himself, as well as his new master, by the energy and good sense he exhibited in the planning and executing of numberless little comforts about his home. His home! Poor fellow, he had scarcely known the meaning of the word before. True he had been allowed by his rough, inconsiderate master to drag his weary limbs after the toil of the day to his wife's home, the provision of her kinder mistress, there to sink into the heavy sleep that exhausted nature demanded, till the morning horn bade him, with aching, stiffened muscles, repair to his never-ending tasks. Now he was instructed to consider this as his own home, himself as the master of this narrow domain. His honest heart swelled with a dawning self-respect. He was

already rising in the scale of existence. It soon became apparent that with occasional advice which he was ready and glad to receive, the time of his probation would be short.

The community of interest in this humble family could not but draw together their young guardians, as they chose to consider themselves, rather than owners, in an intercourse soothing to the feelings of both. Harry, in pleasing cares and congenial society, already began to recover a healthy tone of mind and body—to lose the keenness of his regrets for the past disappointment in the hope of untramelled usefulness in the vineyard of his Lord. He looked now to the period of his ordination with solemn joy, as to the realization of the longings of his boyhood, and the oft repeated consecration of his maturer years.

The presence of Mrs. Bradford, and Harry's easy frankness again dissipated the conscious embarrassment of Susan. She saw him rising above the clouds that so recently overspread his horizon, and believed, with woman's self-abnegating love, that when he fully regained his peace of mind, she could be satisfied, even happy.

CHAPTER XXXI.

WOODBURY CIRCUIT AT LAST.

"Go to thy home, rejoicing son and brother,
Bearing fresh gladness to the household scene."

MRS. HEMANS.

THE weeks sped swiftly along till they brought the time for the assembling of conference. Then friends gathered about them, and Harry had enough to occupy him in conversing with his dearly loved brethren. Each little field of consecrated labor was a fresh interest to be discussed. Mr. Preston, Mr. Lanning, Mr. Temple, Mr. Selden and others, endeared by the memory of countless acts of brotherly kindness, and scenes of participated joy and sorrow, claimed his time and attention. Then the business of conference, with the uncertainty whether he should be sent further than ever from the home he loved, all in turn claimed his regards and all tended to erase the memory of painful events, to make him forget the past, and press forward to the goal of his higher aspirations.

Harry's ordination was an event of absorbing interest, not only to himself, but to many that witnessed it. To some, its solemnity was enhanced by a knowledge of the snare from which he had just escaped. The baptism of his little namesake, which quickly followed, was another of those heart festivals that sometimes shed their radiance over the checkered path of life. An acquaintance had been already formed and was fast ripening into warm

friendship on the part of Mrs. Bradford and Susan for Mrs. Temple, to Harry's great delight, who had repeatedly asserted that three more perfectly congenial spirits were not to be found, and laughingly added, that he almost feared that when once brought together, they would forever after be undistinguishable. All met at the baptism, and all felt that the baby-boy and his name had bound the links of love more strongly about them.

Then came the trying time of hearing the appointments read out. For a while Mrs. Bradford hesitated about being present. From the repeated disappointment of a hope that would not be repressed, she was trying to put away the thought of her son being sent to Woodbury circuit. But what can quell the yearnings of a mother's heart, for the presence, the loving ministrations of an only child? The spirit truly may be willing, but the flesh is weak. One hour's talk with Harry, his prayer of self-consecration, often poured out before, but still and ever needing renewal, gave the requisite strength. These were the channels through which the grace was received to abide the issue, whatever it might be, as coming, faith assured them, from a wise and tender Father.

Mrs. Bradford went to the conference room, and sat patiently through the dispatch of the last items of business, till at last all took their seats—the venerable bishop ascended the pulpit and began to read. Every pulse seemed to pause, for the fate of many hung in the balance. When the words long listened for came, "Woodbury circuit—Harry Bradford," the eyes of mother and son met in one glance of unaffected surprise which soon kindled into delighted congratulation.

Many of the preachers, who were impatient to return home, had made arrangements to start on their several journeys immediately from the conference room, so that it was long before Harry got through with his leave-takings, and the galleries were nearly cleared before he was ready to join his mother and the little party of sympathizing friends who had gathered round her. Mrs. Temple, Mrs. Austen, Susan, and others, were there; but if she had been alone, she would scarcely have known it. The delightful certainty that her home for the next year, at least, would be Harry's home, filled and satisfied her entire consciousness. She smiled in answer to the smiles of those around her; she could even reply briefly to their congratulations; still one idea pervaded her whole being. She was not to return home leaving Harry to find his way in lonely sadness to some remote corner of the conference, and spend his year among a new people. Woodbury was about the centre of the circuit, and he could be at home frequently, at short notice, if needful. Her poor dejected father, and the tender-hearted Willie, how would they rejoice. It was useless to write, for as the mail was carried but twice in a week, they would get there as soon as a letter could, and be the bearers of the joyful surprise themselves.

Mrs. Bradford was in the midst of reveries like these, when Mr. Austen and Harry joined them in the vestibule of the church. Again she met the beaming eyes of her son, and answered his few impressive words by clasping the arm she leaned upon more closely to her bosom.

Mrs. Rodney, if not as happy, was certainly more elated, at hearing of the appointment of Harry, than they were. Now his pride must give way to his love,

when he saw Rose at Gaywood, and then both would be happy again. She believed Harry was looking forward to the same result, for she had not seen him in as good spirits since his return from Hunter's Lodge.

Thus Mrs. Rodney continued to foster her delusion, while, on the contrary, the prospect of seeing Rose was the only drawback to Harry's satisfaction in being sent to Woodbury. The recollection that he had ever loved one so heartless, so false to every noble trait of woman's character, and to see her who had so lately professed the name of Christ, now utterly regardless of his most solemn requirements, must ever be a source of pain to his upright mind. The intimacy that had subsisted between the families for generations, made it necessary for him to visit them, unpleasant as it must be.

It was long since Hunter's Lodge had witnessed so much happiness as beamed upon it with the return of Mrs. Bradford and Harry. Willie's unexpected restoration to comparative health had revivified even his disconsolate father, and both now hailed the arrival of Harry as the greatest of earthly blessings. Willie exulted in the prospect of his assistance in studies which he had planned for himself, and in his companionship in rides and walks, and, above all, in long old-time talks on the dear old sofa. He could scarcely bear him out of his sight, and literally nestled in his bosom again, as in days of boyhood.

Col. Hunter seemed, at first, to lose sight of the fact, that his grandson must be away from them the greater part of the time, only realizing that he had come home once more, bringing sunshine to every heart. He at once entered upon the discussion of business relating to the estate, seeming anxious to transfer it all to Harry, at

the same time making it painfully apparent how incompetent he was to have the care of it himself.

In repeated instances Harry referred to Willie and to Mr. Boyd, the overseer, but was given to understand that his grandfather considered the one a mere child, and neither of them at all competent to relieve him of the burden, while Harry was the real proprietor, into whose hands he was ready to resign all authority and responsibility. This idea had so firmly established itself in his mind, that Harry forbore to combat it, and listened respectfully to his directions, promising to attend to as much of the business as he could consistently with his necessary absence on the circuit.

This allusion recalled the old gentleman to the actual state of the case. He sat silent and sorrowful, trying to reconcile the idea of Harry's absence with that of his presence, but the latter was so much the more vivid, that his thoughts soon run on in the same channel, as if nothing had occurred to interrupt them.

Harry was at a loss to decide how far it was best to indulge this pleasing fancy. He looked at Willie, who smiled as he drew the circling arm more closely around him, and whispered, in a tone too low to reach his father's ear, "Do not oppose him, dear Harry, it comforts him, and we will talk about it another time."

A few days' observation convinced Harry that he must indeed assume much of the management at the Lodge. Willie had never been able to give sufficient attention to the subject to become a practical agriculturist; and even if his father were willing, could only be nominally at the head of affairs; and Col. Hunter still retained too much of his feeling of self-reliance, to submit his judgment, weakened and erroneous as it had become, to that

of an overseer. Consequently disorders among the servants, and discontent on the part of Mr. Boyd, were beginning to show themselves—only kept from actual outbreak by the gentle spirit of conciliation exercised by Willie and Mrs. Bradford.

This additional occupation of his thoughts was, in the present juncture, an advantage to Harry. It involved little time or labor. He had only to talk with his grandfather, and gently lead him to approve of those measures which had been previously decided upon in consultation with Mr. Boyd; but frequently even that was unnecessary, for he would put aside the subject with observations like the following:

"Harry, my son, it is time for me to give up care now. I wish you to order what you think best;" or "I never shall be able to attend to business again; you will relieve me from a burden if you will manage everything."

He would sometimes ride out with his grandson and look around, always approving what was done, if he had no reason to doubt that it was by Harry's direction. As his feebleness increased, he lost more and more of the unbending will of his earlier years, and became passive—confiding more in others than himself. His daughter, had she chosen, could have guided him at her will, but she preferred to encourage him in the exercise of his own mental powers, as their best preservative. But now that he had Harry to lean upon, he could no longer be persuaded to exert himself. He was a source of solicitude to his affectionate children, on account of the danger to which he was constantly liable from another attack of his malady.

It was affecting to notice how he seemed to live in Harry. He kept a plan of the circuit always at hand,

and could at any time tell where he was, his hours of preaching, and the time when he might be expected at home. Though he spent much of his time in total silence—sometimes reading, but more frequently in deep thought—yet if Harry's name was mentioned, he brightened at once, and was ready to talk or listen as long as he was the theme. Mrs. Bradford and Willie learned to use it as an affectionate stratagem upon him. When his silence deepened into gloom—when he began to walk from room to room, his head drooping upon his bosom, and his hands locked behind him, uttering low sighs or groans—then the name of his beloved grandson alone was sufficient to recall him from these mournful reveries. From that subject it was easy to give his thoughts a higher range; and he would listen with a peaceful smile to the consolations of religion, often with touching simplicity asking for those portions of Scripture to be read, that Harry had last read or commended to his notice.

When the time drew near for Harry to come home, he would try to busy himself in little acts of preparation for the expected guest. The finest products of the garden must be reserved for that day. Every little incident of interest that occurred, was treasured up, to be detailed to Harry. His room was again and again inspected to see that everything was in order; his books carefully arranged by his own hands, where he thought he would wish to find them. Then he would sit down to watch the road for his approach. He became restless and uneasy for days before Harry was to preach at Mount Carmel, watching the clouds, lest the weather should be unfavorable for him to go out. When able to be present, he scarcely removed his earnest gaze from the face of the young preacher for a moment. Now and then a

tear would slowly gather in his eye, but was quickly arrested with some accompanying movement, indicating a habitual unwillingness to betray what might be considered an unmanly weakness.

Willie had health enough to walk or ride about the place with Harry, or to read and talk with him when within doors. He could hear him preach; and better than all, when the weather became settled, he could go with him to many of his appointments on the circuit, where he was as tenderly watched and guarded from fatigue or exposure, as he could have been at home by his beloved sister. This was an unwonted treat for the delicate invalid, after his long winter's confinement, and a source of heart-felt enjoyment to both. The long rides through the "leafy bowers of June"—the unfolding of heart to heart—the pleasant variety of scenes and circumstances by which he was surrounded at the different stopping-places on their excursions, wrought a marvellous change in Willie. He even ventured to take part in prayer-meetings and class-meetings. Wherever he became known, his engaging manners, and almost angelic countenance, adorned by his humble but ardent devotion, won his way to the hearts of the people, and a repetition of his visits was urged with all the warmth of Christian friendship.

At every return to the dear shades of home, loving hearts received them; and Mrs. Bradford had the satisfaction of marking the decided improvement in the health and spirits of both her "darling boys," as they loved to be called. Peace, temporal as well as spiritual, flowed like a river, and Willie's cup was full.

CHAPTER XXXII.

A CORRESPONDENCE.

"I have loved; in vain outpouring
All my heart's wealth at thy shrine,
But the soul I was adoring
I seek farther—'twas not thine.
Thine?—No—'twas some bright ideal
Which in thee I thought I found.
Hoping yet to find it real,
I advance to higher ground."

Several days had elapsed after Harry's return home before he really had time to ride over to Gaywood. His frank and full conversation with Mrs. Carter, in Baltimore, had left no expectation on that lady's mind of his ever being anything more to her daughter than the friend he had always been before a tenderer tie was formed. Grieved and disappointed she was, in common with others of the family, but could find nothing to justify the slightest censure of his conduct, and though maternal partiality led her to palliate much of Rose's imprudence, she saw that there could be no happiness in a union of characters so different.

Fully apprised by her mother of the position Harry so steadily maintained, Rose refused to see him. She could have been haughty and disdainful at his indifference, or penitent and affectionate if there had been the least hope of shaking his resolution; but to be calmly friendly and dignified, while love and resentment were waging such a

warfare in her bosom, was not to be expected of her impulsive nature.

Supposing that such a state of things could not long be sustained, but that they must meet sooner or later, Harry regretted the postponement. His first return to the Lodge, after entering upon the labors of the circuit, was too short, and crowded with home duties, to allow him to make another visit to Gaywood, and before a second, Rose had prevailed over her indulgent mother, by tears and arguments, based upon her embarrassing relation to Harry, to allow her to return to Baltimore, there to blunt the small amount of sensibility she yet retained in a ceaseless round of gaiety and fashion. This, under the circumstances, could not but be considered a relief to all the inmates of Hunter's Lodge.

Nothing now remained to mar the quiet enjoyment of this attached family, in which Mr. and Mrs. Preston largely participated. It had long been the ardent wish of the former to have his beloved young friend, who had so nobly realized his fatherly predictions, in his own district, and now that wish was gratified. Mr. Stuart and his amiable wife occupied Glen Cottage. The family at Gaywood, though they could not at once overcome their chagrin at the destruction of their favorite plans, just as they seemed about to be realized, feeling that it was inevitable and final, ceased to allude to it, and social intercourse continued as usual.

Frequent letters from Mrs. Rodney and Susan kept their friends informed of whatever of interest transpired in Baltimore. The gentle heart of Susan was becoming daily more disciplined to find its happiness in that of others. The little family, over which she watched with affectionate care, was now a source of unmixed enjoy-

ment; and a great part of that enjoyment she loved to remember was due to the benevolence of him whose virtues it was her delight to contemplate. This enhanced the satisfaction derived from witnessing the peace and comfort that had taken up their abode in the humble dwelling of Ben and Patsey. Then her beloved Mrs. Bradford was happy, and Harry himself, she trusted, was gradually recovering from the shock of his disappointment in Rose. All combined to deepen the peace—the abiding, heaven-born peace—of her own mind; and although she had seen them depart from conference with a sigh, she turned again to the quiet round of her duties, and found consolation. Ben and Patsey were justifying, by industry, good management, and respectable behavior, the sanguine expectations of their young protectors, and rapidly preparing themselves for that freedom which, in their present comfort and gratitude to the promoters of it, they scarcely coveted.

Harry seemed to find it more agreeable to communicate through Susan with his man Ben, than any of his other friends. She was more interested, of course, in the various little arrangements in which he was engaged, than any one else could be, and there were sometimes sportive contests as to who was to be considered owner of the house. Susan contended that Ben, as the husband, was the proprietor of the little homestead, which Harry would not allow, for Susan had bought it and given it to Patsey. This Susan denied; she still held the house in her own name, and if she pleased could give it to Ben, and then there would be no doubt of his right.

In this way the correspondence went on, but gradually changed from short notes to longer epistles, in which thought was freely interchanged on more comprehensive

and weighty subjects. Susan often trembled at the deepening interest with which she watched for each successive letter, and often long intervals would elapse before she dared to answer them. But that only brought an inquiry from Harry, why she did not write and answer certain questions in his last. On these occasions, prompted by a delicate tact, a part of the sheet would be filled by Mrs. Bradford or Willie. The modest sensitiveness thus shielded and reassured, again the interest of the correspondence drew her on.

Harry confidently believed she cherished some unrequited or unfortunate attachment, and at first he imagined it was sympathetic feeling alone that attracted him, but soon no other incentive was needed than the charm of drawing forth the treasures of intelligence, of refined womanly feeling and sentiment generally concealed by modest diffidence and humility. Often, as before, the reflection would occur, "Ah, if Rose had only been of such a mind and character. And that strange being who is either insensible of the jewel he possesses, or mysteriously withheld from its attainment. Who can he be? And what can be the barrier between them?"

Rose had gone to spend the season with her brother and sister at Nahant. There they were joined by Mr. Conway and his sister, Mrs. McArthur, and whispers from time to time reached the Lodge, that Rose was beginning to listen with favor to the passionate pleadings of her southern lover. Thus time glided along till spring bloomed into summer, and summer ripened into autumn. Then came a confirmation of the rumors of approaching marriage. George and Virginia had made a short trip to Nahant, and did not deny that there was

some truth in it. These various items were usually conveyed through Virginia to her sister, though once Mrs. Rodney, in writing to her niece, had hinted that Mr. Conway was in constant and devoted attendance upon Rose, hoping thereby to elicit some spark of jealousy in the mind of Harry, and favor her still cherished hope that something would yet occur to dispel the cloud between them.

Mrs. Bradford handed the letter to her son, premising that it contained some mention of Rose. He read it without change of countenance, merely observing with a sigh, as he handed it back, that "he was glad to believe Mr. Conway was a man of good character, and not involved in the censure that had been so liberally bestowed on his sister. And that if Rose should marry him, she would probably reside at the South, remote from the pernicious influence that she had found herself so unable to resist."

Willie, who was present, remarked to his sister, after Harry had left the room, that he had no fear for Harry's happiness, on the subject of attachment to Rose—that he had talked freely with him about her, and only seemed to manifest a brother's interest in her welfare. This was a great comfort to Mrs. Bradford, for she had abstained from saying much to him herself, as the course most likely to assist him in conquering any lingering regret, if such there were.

Mrs. Carter went to Baltimore late in the fall, hoping to induce Rose to return with her, but did not effect her object, and before Christmas, invitations to the wedding came for the families at Gaywood and Hunter's Lodge. Mrs. Carter was still there, but the other members of the family went, bearing kind words and wishes from

the dwellers at the Lodge. They all declined making part of the gay company.

Everything went off with the greatest éclat. The papers were eloquent on the beauty of the bride, the magnificence of her dress, and the splendor of the parties given in her honor. In a few weeks Mr. Conway bore off his prize in triumph to his ancestral home in the sunny South.

The winter's experience fully convinced Harry that he must either obtain the indulgence of the conference for a reappointment to Woodbury, or ask to be left without an appointment for the year. Neither his grandfather nor Willie had been able to go out during the winter, and he could not but see that the time was drawing near when he must give himself entirely to the duties thus providentially laid upon him. It was a heavy trial, but he had long been in training for it, and met it submissively, though with a sad heart. Mr. Preston, whose term of eldership expired at this conference, entirely concurred in the necessity for his being at home, and promised to do all he could to promote his wishes.

Harry went immediately to the house of his Aunt Rodney when conference time arrived. He found her looking badly, and out of spirits. Pride had sustained her through the exciting scenes of Rose's marriage, but not even the splendor of the match could reconcile her to the failure of her plan of ingrafting her beloved Rose upon her own family tree, or to the separation which it involved. She received Harry with coolness, which as usual yielded to his affectionate deference and persevering kindness.

He was frequently at Aspen Grove. Generally Mr. Austen took out several of the preachers to pass the

night, and Harry often went with them. Sometimes he would stay and drive Mrs. Austen or Susan into town in the buggy, as Mr. Austen's business called him there earlier than was convenient for them. When Susan was his companion he more than once surprised himself, as he had done in their recent stage-ride, by speaking to his attentive and interested auditor of his own peculiar circumstances, with as little reserve as he would have done to his mother or Willie. He spoke of Rose with great kindness, and of the dissolution of his engagement as a great relief to his mind, in such a way as to leave no doubt that love had long since given place to strong disapprobation, only softened by pity. But when on one or two occasions his manner to herself became unmistakably tender, her startled sensitiveness took the semblance of intentional retreat from any such demonstration. It was instantly checked, and she blamed herself for imagining that it had ever been. In this way, each misunderstood the other, and so they parted; Harry painfully confirmed in his belief that she loved another, and Susan trembling lest she had betrayed the secret of that love which she was convinced could never be returned. She had long since withdrawn from the correspondence, as too interesting, too absorbing for the stability of that peace she had so faithfully struggled to obtain.

It was decided that the probation of Ben and Patsey had been long enough to prove their entire ability to take care of themselves. So all the arrangements were made, and they were put in full possession of that liberty to which they were entitled not only by the will of God, but by their excellence of character.

Harry obtained his wish and was reappointed to

Woodbury. Mrs. Rodney was induced to go back with him. She stayed several weeks, but the sad decline of her brother and his son, was a constant remembrancer of the fading glories of her family, and she returned to Baltimore, not much benefited by the visit.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

FIRST LOVE.

"Yet, still thy name, thy blessed name,
My lonely bosom fills,
Like an echo that hath lost itself
Among the distant hills,
Which still with melancholy note
Keeps faintly ling'ring on,
When the joyous sound that woke it first
Is gone—forever gone!"

MRS. NORTON.

ONE warm evening after Colonel Hunter and Willie had retired, Harry and his mother still sat on the portico, enjoying the cool night breeze. There was no moon, and the light from the hall only partially dispelled the shadow; but more was not required to show to each the love that beamed from eye to eye. Words were equally needless. After a while, Harry rose and began his walk up and down.

"Does anything trouble you, my son?"

Harry did not reply to this question, but resumed his seat, saying, "Mother, Willie tells me you feel some anxiety on my account. You surely cannot suppose I am suffering from any remains of affection for Rose?"

"I am glad to hear you speak so, my child; but I have been noticing that since your return from conference you do not seem so bright and well as you did, and feared the scenes where you suffered so much might have renewed the pain."

After a while, Harry resumed: "Mother, that attachment was a kind of a forced growth in my heart. Many circumstances tended to promote it—even urge it upon me. It was not natural, and I can never be too thankful that it is ended."

"How long have you taken that view of it?"

"I do not exactly know when it began, but it has been growing upon me since—I sometimes think before the termination of the engagement. It certainly was very soon forced upon my reluctant consciousness that Rose was not the character that I loved, though I long hoped she would become so. That idea was the one that nearly crushed me—not the separation. That, when it came, was a positive relief."

"And yet you seemed happy in your love?"

"I was to a certain extent. But I now see it was a species of delirium, especially when in her presence, in which my judgment was completely hoodwinked, my senses dazzled, and everything wore a delusive aspect. When away from her, my soberer judgment might have resumed its sway, but I dared not listen. I had gone too far—too hastily it must be confessed; but having the most unwavering confidence in her spiritual change, I saw not the depths of misery in which I had involved myself, so long as she kept up the appearance of religion, and threw over me the spell of her insnaring tenderness. I am sometimes tempted to question whether it was genuine love that I then felt—but I suppose it was at least a modification of that sentiment, only finding no congenial soil to fasten upon, it did not come to perfection. I have since found that I am capable of a far deeper, purer love than I ever felt for Rose, and my heart now pines for its true mate."

"Harry, do you not expect to find your heart's true mate?"

Harry did not reply, but again began his restless walk. After a long silence, he came back and resumed his seat, saying in a low voice:

"Mother, Rose was not my first love."

"I am glad you think so, Harry."

"What can there be in that to be glad of, dear mother?"

Now it was Mrs. Bradford's turn to be silent, and Harry sat, as if trying to find the answer himself, but being unsuccessful, he repeated, "Why are you glad, mother?"

"Because, my dear son, there is more hope of your being happy when you gain your first love."

"Oh, mother, mother, there is no hope of that. Do not mock me with such a delusion."

"I do not consider it a delusion, Harry."

"But you surely do not understand me. I thought you would remember"——

"I do remember. You thought for a while that you loved Susan, after you supposed she was unattainable."

"And I know now that I did love her, though not as I have learned to love her since. I never told you or any one how much it cost me to give her up. But I believed that love was sin—and I conquered it—as I thought—yes, I did conquer it—but"——

"But what? You seem to be vibrating between two opinions."

"I am. If I really loved her when I heard of her engagement, I must have begun to love her when I was a child, for even then when any of the other

boys walked beside her in our rambles, or gave her the flowers and fruit they had gathered, the smile that thanked them always made me feel uncomfortable till I could offer some that were finer and receive a brighter smile in return. I remember, I used even then to watch for that quick flash of color, and felt its charm without knowing why. If I have really loved her so long, how could it be so completely conquered?"

"No doubt it was because, as you said yourself, you knew it was a sin to love one that there was good reason to believe belonged to another. In a conscientious mind that would be sufficient."

"But then again, if the sentiment was entirely dead, as it certainly appeared to be, how should it spring into existence again so readily?"

"From the same causes, no doubt, that first gave it existence; uncommon loveliness of character, and harmony of views on all important subjects, with the knowledge that no impassable barrier exists between you."

"Oh, if I could only be assured that there is none. But her affection for that unknown mysterious somebody! Will it ever become extinct, as mine for Rose has? Perhaps her love was founded on real excellence, and if so, it is not likely to give place to another. If I might only hope it would, I could be content to wait. Yes, as long as Jacob waited for his Rachel. But I will not say with how much patience."

"I do not think Susan's first love will stand much in your way, Harry."

"Why, mother! Do you really think so? and have you sufficient grounds for such an opinion?"

"I think I have, my son. I would be the last to mis-

lead you. But do not question me further. I may possibly be mistaken, and you must ascertain for yourself."

Harry did not speak for some time, but now and then bestowed a fond caress upon his mother, as if to express his gratitude for the dawning hope she had indicated.

"You must have been frequently with Susan when you were in Baltimore," resumed Mrs. Bradford; "how did she appear?"

"Oh, more lovely than ever. Our correspondence had given me an insight into her superiority of mind that I might never have obtained otherwise, and furnished subjects of conversation that drew her out before her shyness could take the alarm. She is so retiring, that if there is any one else to converse, she seems to prefer the part of listener. But her very silence is eloquent, from the quick and expressive changes of her countenance. Once I had the temerity to venture some little attention beyond what might be expected from mere friendship."

"How did she receive it?"

"It seemed to embarrass her so much that I immediately imagined the presence of my unknown rival, and almost felt his frown. Had it not been for that, I might have been vain enough to interpret her blushes in my own favor."

"Perhaps you misunderstood her. She is as timid as a fawn, when not inspired by some high impulse of principle."

"I know she is. But Rose always met any attention of mine with so much frankness, while Susan reminds me of the sensitive plant shrinking and folding her leaves from the slightest touch."

"Which manner do you prefer?"

"Oh, Susan's beyond comparison, if it did not so discourage me. I sometimes have tormented myself with the idea that she would rather receive attention from others than from me."

"Oh, Harry," said Mrs. Bradford, smiling, "you have much to learn yet. Your lessons in female character and manners have not been taken from the best models—at any rate in one instance."

"Poor Rose," sighed Harry, after a long pause; "I hope she is happy."

"I hope so, too, most earnestly, my son, and I pray that she and her husband may speedily learn the true source of happiness."

"Amen and amen," was the fervent response. Then, as Mrs. Bradford rose, he added, "Do not go yet, dear mother. It is not late, is it? You have comforted me greatly, but I am not quite satisfied. Would you advise me to make a visit to Aspen Grove?"

"No, my son; it would be entirely useless."

The light from the hall now shone full upon Mrs. Bradford's face, and the expression that met her son's quick glance of inquiry was far from alarming.

"Ah, now you are teasing me, I know; but I am not to be so easily frightened. Why would it be useless, dear mother?"

"Because Mrs. Allington was here to-day, and told me that they have been a long time begging a visit from Susan; that she has at last consented to come, and that they expect to see her next week."

Harry could not thank Susan, so he had to content himself with drawing his mother close to him, and passing his hand fondly over her head, while he whispered,

"Dear mother, I am happier to-night than I have been for a long time."

"That is always enough to make me so, my precious boy, and I thank you for talking so freely. It has relieved my anxiety entirely. It is not every young man that would make a confidant of his mother on such a subject."

"If they had mothers such as I have they would. But if your anxiety is entirely relieved, I wish I could say mine is. Mother, I ought to confide in your judgment; but do not let me make another false step. I am afraid I could not bear it as well this time. Have I really no reason to fear an obstacle in that previous attachment?"

"In my opinion not the least; but again, you must not question me further. Find out for yourself. '*Faint heart*,' you know," and laughing at his tenacity in holding on to what she believed to be a mere shadow, she bade him "good night."

Harry and Willie were to have left home together the next day, but Willie had apparently taken a slight cold, which brought on a return of his cough, so he reluctantly consented to be left at home. Harry shared in the disappointment, for he loved the sweet communion they enjoyed on their lonely rides about the circuit. He, however, found enough to employ his thoughts in reviewing and pondering his conversation with his mother, and the course of action to which she encouraged him.

Having made one mistake so nearly fatal, he tried to arm himself with all the caution he could command, not because of any uncertainty respecting the natural or Christian graces of Susan's character—there he rested in perfect security—but because all his reliance on his

mother's penetration and discretion could not overcome his dread of a repulse. He alone had witnessed her painful confusion when he thoughtlessly alluded to her possible marriage. That, he was convinced, was no mere maiden bashfulness. It was too evident suffering to be mistaken. Still, if there was no hope to nourish it, might it not have become extinct? "But, oh," he thought, "if that unfortunate obstacle had never arisen, and I could have won her before either of us had been led in paths so divergent and so disastrous, how happy I might have been!"

In meditations such as these, Harry pursued his way to his appointment, but unfortunately he found they still haunted him when other things demanded his attention. It was only by a strong resolution, formed not in his own strength, that he could put them away, and he at once became convinced that unless the case was soon decided one way or the other, he could not give himself to the work of his ministry as that work required.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE MINIATURE TELLS TALES.

"The best of us, until we die,
Is less a saint than woman,
And while we pray for love divine
Our hearts yearn for the human."

PHEBE CARY.

WHEN Richard Allington and his wife urged Susan to make them the often-deferred visit, she still hesitated and delayed as long as she could without seriously wounding their feelings, and only acceded to their wish by persuading herself that Harry would be in her neighborhood but once in four weeks, and that her visits to his mother could be restricted to the times of his absence from home.

The day after her arrival at Forestdale, Mrs. Bradford came to see and welcome her. She then learned that Harry was in a distant part of the circuit and not expected home for a week, so she readily promised to return the visit at an early day.

Accordingly she rode over one evening and found her friend just getting into the carriage for an evening drive with her father and brother. All united in begging her to join them. Willie, especially, would scarcely be denied till she pleaded a headache in excuse. Neither would she allow them to stay on her account, but begged to be allowed to find her own entertainment till they returned.

"Well, dear, you shall do just as you please," was Mrs. Bradford's reply. "You will find your room next to mine in order for you. Perhaps you had better lie down on my sofa; Willie will tell you that is a sovereign remedy for headache, and we shall not be long gone."

Susan proceeded to the room as directed, and laying aside her bonnet found herself much refreshed by the coolness of the apartment, by bathing her face and arranging her hair. She amused herself with a book for a while, but fearing it might bring back the pain, she laid it aside and strolled into Mrs. Bradford's room.

As she approached the little workstand of her friend, she was startled by the sight of the very picture that Rose had once so gaily exhibited and offered to the highest bidder. She took it up and fastening her eyes upon it, sat down without removing them. The artist had caught the finest expression of the original, the lighting up that preceded the voice when he was about to speak.

The temptation was strong and sudden, or the conscientious girl might have denied herself the dangerous indulgence of that long gaze. After some moments she clasped the miniature in her hands as she pressed them to her bosom, and sighed forth,

"Oh, Rose! infatuated Rose! If I possessed even this lifeless shadow, what would induce me to part with it?"

Instantly a quick conviction that she was doing wrong flashed into her mind. She hastily replaced the picture, and dropping her face into her hands, murmured,

"Father, forgive me—strengthen me."

She started. Was it imagination? Or did she hear a sound in the portico that ran along the whole length of the house? She cast a frightened glance through the

window but saw no one. The servants had been fastening up some long trailing branches of the vines that draped the pillars and balustrade. Could that have been the cause of the sound? It must have been, for no one else was near.

She sat down again, drew a long breath of relief, and then began to reflect upon her imprudence. Without allowing her pleading heart one more glance at the beloved features, she retreated to her own room, where she in some degree recovered her composure; but not so easily her self-approval. She had fallen into the first snare that presented itself, and although she again and again assured herself that there could have been no one about but the servants below, yet the imprudence was none the less censurable, and she almost regretted that she came into the neighborhood. But the longer she dwelt upon it, the clearer became her conviction that her alarm was perfectly groundless; and when she saw the returning carriage, she ran down to meet her friends with a light step and unembarrassed smile.

Her spirits seemed to rebound from the momentary shock they had sustained, and she bore her part in the social circle around the evening meal, with an unaffected gaiety that occasionally lighted up even the pensive features of Col. Hunter with a smile. With woman's gentlest tact, she drew him into conversation and kept him pleasantly occupied till Willie called upon her for a song. As he had been unable for several days to sing himself, here was another opportunity for her ever ready benevolence, and with alternate music and conversation, the evening advanced so pleasantly that Mrs. Bradford found herself unconsciously indulging anticipations of the time when she fondly hoped to claim this sweet girl

as a daughter, to be ever the light and joy of all hearts at Hunter's Lodge.

While thus abstracted from the immediate scene around, her ear caught the sound of an approaching horseman. Quietly stepping through the window which opened down to the floor, she stood one moment wondering who it could be, and the next found herself in the arms of her son.

He detained her there long enough to whisper, "Mother, I have been at home before this evening. Make no comment upon it at present. No one must know it. But oh, my mother! I am very happy."

The song suddenly ceased as they entered the room, and Willie sprung up, exclaiming, "Why, here is Harry!"

Col. Hunter, too, started from his reclining posture, and came forward, saying, with some trepidation:

"My son, what is the matter? Are you sick?"

"Oh no, dear grandfather, I am perfectly well, but I flattered myself that you could not have too much of my company, and as I could obtain a very acceptable substitute, I came home—that is all;" and turning, while yet speaking, to Susan, he bestowed upon her so expressive a greeting as to send the blood in crimson tides to her cheeks, while her fluttering heart seemed ready to burst its swelling prison.

"But what made you so late, dear Harry?" inquired Willie.

"Oh, I stopped at Gaywood. I had a presentiment that if I waited till to-morrow I should not have time. Then I had to listen to a systematic rating from Mrs. Carter and Jinnie, for my past delinquencies of that kind which lasted till supper-time. After that, I fell

into the hands of David and Sophy, who would not let off 'Cousin Harry,' without their accustomed game of romps; so, after all, it is a wonder I was able to get here to-night. But how is your cold, little uncle?"

"I did think it was better this morning, but in trying to sing with Susie, I found it was impossible to do anything but croak, so I must depend upon her for my music, and you, now you have come."

"Very well, I am ready. Come Lily," and again bending his eyes upon her with impressive tenderness, he offered his hand to lead her to her seat.

Susan raised her wondering face to his, and instantly dropped it again, as she felt the color deepening in her cheek. She hesitated, doubting whether she could still her beating heart enough to sing. Mrs. Bradford, who caught the magnetic current as it seemed to flash from eye to eye, interposed:

"No, dear girl. I cannot let you exert yourself for our pleasure again. You have a headache, and we will punish this loiterer for his delay, by not permitting him to hear you to-night"

Grateful for this seasonable support, Susan sat down, though she might have said she had forgotten she ever had a headache, and Mrs. Bradford continued to keep Harry engaged in conversation till they separated, though she failed to keep his eyes from straying.

Susan declined going into Mrs. Bradford's room. She longed to be alone that she might analyze, if possible, the singular expression of Harry's eyes. Long she studied without coming to a definite decision. One thing she could not disguise from herself; that expression, whatever it meant, had penetrated to the depths of her heart, and met a response there that caused no

self-reproach. She questioned no further. In vain she reminded herself that Harry had not said a word differing from his usual kindness, for as often as she recalled his looks, the same unmistakable language was there, and caused an answering thrill. At last she gave up attempting to unravel the mystery, and fell asleep, rapt in strange happiness to which she had long been unaccustomed.

When, an hour after, Mrs. Bradford stepped lightly into the room, and bent over her, a soft blush still lingered on her cheek, and a smile quivered on her lips, as if, even in sleep, the warming influence of hope was glowing within.

When Mrs. Bradford had parted from Susan at the door of her room, she passed through her own and stepped into the portico. Harry was waiting for her."

"I knew you would come, best of mothers, for your heart always beats in tune with mine." And he drew her into the room, carefully closing the door.

"Well, Harry, now for this mystery of mysteries; I must confess my curiosity is considerably excited."

"Indeed! I thought you were exempt from that trait so generally attributed to your sex."

"But I have heard and seen enough to-night to create it where it never had an existence."

"What have you seen, dear mother?" was Harry's smiling question.

"Why, I have seen actual scintillations of light passing from your eyes and falling upon an object that was not, if I may hazard an opinion, unwilling to receive them."

"Mother—but I am going to be very methodical, and begin at the beginning."

"Anywhere, only begin, for I am getting impatient."

"Well, you know you encouraged me to believe that my hope of one day gaining Susan was not altogether presumptuous."

"And I see no occasion to change my ground."

"In that view of the case, I found my mind not quite as much on my work as it should have been. A kind brother just then came along, and was willing to fill my place. I thought the best thing I could do, would be to decide the case at once. It was also rather important for me to see Mr. Boyd about some business; so I came here first, intending to proceed to Forestdale to-morrow. Finding no one down stairs, I came up to my room, and thought I would step lightly along the portico and surprise you. Pete was making a great noise with his hammer, so I stole along till I came near enough to see that another occupied your seat. You can easily guess who it was. Oh, mother, she held in her hand my miniature, unless you have some other with a setting and chain exactly like it."

"No, I have not; and I remembered, after I was in the carriage, that I had left it out."

"Then you do not think I could be mistaken?"

"Not about the picture, certainly."

Harry then repeated the words that were indelibly stamped upon his memory—adding, "Just think what self-denial I had to practise. My first impulse was to rush into the room, and pour out my delight—my gratitude—my love. But happily, reason returned in time to prevent my giving such a shock to her delicacy. My next thought was of the necessity for immediate retreat, which I effected more hastily and noiselessly than I made my approach. Fortunately the window of the next room was open, and assisted me to make my escape suc-

cessfully. My horse still stood where I left him. Without the aid of stirrup, I was instantly in the saddle, and flying with all speed from the very place where I most desired to be. Mother, I cannot blame myself, for all passed so quickly, that I had no time to make my presence known, before I became aware that a knowledge of it would exceedingly distress her. For worlds, I would not that she should know it. She would be miserable at that which makes me so happy, unless indeed you think I can possibly be mistaken."

"No, my son, it only confirms me in the opinion I have long held, that this sweet girl loves you. I am glad you acted just as you did; it was the only way to save her feelings. Now I can congratulate you upon your present choice. She is all that my fondest wishes could ask for you, and I have no fear that you will fail to cherish and love her as she deserves."

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE GATHERED LILY.

"Then come those full confidings of the past,
All sunshine now, where all was overcast;
Then do they wander till the day is gone,
Lost in each other."

ROGERS.

THE next morning, to Harry's great annoyance, his grandfather seemed to awake to an unwonted interest in farm affairs, and engaged him in a close discussion with regard to some changes already suggested by himself, and considered settled long before. He then proposed to ride with him to the spot, that everything might be more fully understood. There was no appeal from such an arrangement, so they set forth together. That affair was no sooner adjusted and Harry returning, than he was called in another direction, by Mr. Boyd, to give his opinion on some question of equal importance. All this could have been borne, and was borne with tolerable patience, but when, as he approached the house, he found himself just in time to receive and hand from their carriage, a party of ladies who had come to spend the day with his mother, it required all his strong sense of duty to behave with politeness.

Notwithstanding all these vexations, the day at last wore away, and he had the pleasure of seeing the carriage draw up and the ladies depart. He watched it as

it rolled through the gates, and when they closed behind it, he turned to his mother and Susan, who still stood on the steps.

"Now, Lily," he said, "as the sun is just about to withdraw his 'all-conquering heat,' I think a walk will refresh you. Besides, I claim a reward for the efforts I have made in helping to entertain these ladies. It is, that you will come with me and pay a visit to 'your mates of the garden,' and also assist me in selecting the fairest and sweetest, to present to my mother on our return."

Susan turned to Mrs. Bradford, who answered the mute appeal by saying—"Excuse me this evening, my love, I will sit here with Willie, and be ready to receive my flower when it comes."

Susan did not raise her eyes high enough, or she might have seen a glance full of meaning, passing between the mother and son. But she looked back as they turned towards the garden.

"You shall have more than one."

"One will answer, if it is the right one," was the reply.

Harry could not but notice the quick flashes of color that came and went in the cheek of his sensitive companion, and sought to draw her into conversation on indifferent subjects, but with only partial success; for his eyes had been discoursing to her all day, and she felt herself the sport of emotions contradictory in their nature, and blending in inextricable confusion. Was it conscience reproving her for accepting his invitation to walk with him alone at the soft twilight hour? Or was it a trembling assurance that love—pure, manly love—beamed from those eyes of deep meaning. Sometimes

one idea predominated, sometimes the other. But to be calm and self-possessed, she long found impossible.

They strolled on from walk to walk, gathering a flower here and there, till Susan almost forgot her agitation, as she entered with enthusiasm into the beauty of the scene. The sun had gone down under a gorgeous canopy of clouds that still floated over his place of rest in volumes of purple and gold. They were near a gate at the extremity of the flower garden. Harry opened it:

"Come, Lily, let us take one view of the west from the 'Sunset tree.'"

They passed out, and a few steps brought them to a rustic seat on the slope of a thickly wooded hill, commanding, through an opening in the forest, a landscape of surpassing beauty. "The day's dying glories" were mirrored in the clear depths of a stream that wound its devious way among the hills. Beyond lay some of the fair, cultivated fields pertaining to Hunter's Lodge. In a few the ripe grain had been gathered in, leaving unbroken the smooth surface of their graceful swell, while others were dotted over with the still standing shocks, and far away the blue tops of the Alleghanies blended with the brighter hues above them. Myriads of fire-flies, just rising from their fragrant beds, lent their tiny lamps to beautify the scene.

After sitting a few moments, gazing in silent thought, Harry turned to Susan and said, as he lightly touched her hand with a spray of sweet-brier:

"But I have not yet obtained the flower that I came here to seek."

Susan, in surprise, held up her bouquet: "Why, Harry! Here are all the fairest and sweetest."

"No; there is one fairer and sweeter. It is a Lily

that I have long desired to wear in my bosom. You alone can bestow it upon me. Will you not do so?"

Susan could no longer doubt his meaning, for the little hand was now gently taken and fondly clasped, while in language too plain to be misunderstood, he told his story. His boyhood's scarce conscious love—his keen regret when he learned that the object of his more matured preference was unattainable—his struggles—his victory. The sad circumstances of his engagement to Rose, so well known already, were barely alluded to. Then the fear that some unknown rival occupied the heart he so coveted for his own.

All was told—but not in an unbroken narrative, for every item required and received a response. After the first tumult of emotion had been tenderly soothed to rest, Susan was surprised at her own calmness. Relieved from the necessity of concealment, so uncongenial to her truthful nature, as well as from the ceaseless warfare with her rebel heart, she rested in the foreshadowing of that which she had always considered the highest destiny of woman, to share the heart and labors of a faithful minister of the cross, to cheer and comfort him in his arduous career. Her soul, elevated above the petty agitations of ordinary love, was filled with solemn peace. Before these young Christians lay the weighty responsibility of the future, yet they faltered not, but cheerfully and devoutly offered themselves, hand in hand, then and there, trusting in the promised strength of grace to meet its utmost demands, only asking that those demands they might meet together.

The glow had faded from the western sky, but not from the hearts of the youthful pair, as they slowly returned through the garden and across the lawn.

Mrs. Bradford sat alone in the portico as they approached.

"Mother, here are your children, come to receive your blessing."

Fervently and fondly indeed was that blessing implored on those happy heads, and tender were the words whispered over the weeping girl who was long held to her bosom.

In passing to his own room, Harry looked in at that of Willie. Instead of finding him as he expected, asleep, he was sitting, wrapped in a dressing-gown, at the open window.

"Why, little uncle, what are you doing up at this late hour for you? Are you not imprudent?"

"No, dear Harry. I often sit here for an hour, when I cannot sleep, and to-night the air is so delicious, I can breathe more easily."

"But are you not lonesome?"

"No; father has just left me. We have been engaged in castle-building."

"Indeed; I hardly supposed either of you romantic enough for that," said Harry, laughing. "Do describe the edifice and its inhabitants."

"Ah, Harry, we are neither of us, as you may well believe, romantic enough to build castles for ourselves. Our castles are for you and sweet Lily. We saw you returning together across the lawn, which naturally led father's mind to the subject of your marriage, though I presume he had no knowledge that you had already chosen the dear girl. I asked him how he would like her for your wife."

"How did it seem to strike him?"

"Very pleasantly, I think; for after a few sad sighs to

the memory of the old 'family compact,' he said that as it was now impossible for you to marry the daughter of his old friend, he knew of no one that he should like better. He spoke of her lovely character and gentle manners, saying he should never be ashamed to see her presiding over the home of his fathers."

"Oh, Willie, you have removed the only apprehension of a cloud between me and perfect happiness to-night. Lily has given herself to me, and now that my grandfather has signified his approbation, what more can I ask?"

Willie looked at him, smiling in delighted sympathy, but in the attempt to speak began to cough.

"Oh, Willie, my dear Willie," said Harry, in an altered tone, "how presumptuous in a mortal to speak of perfect happiness! especially for me, while you are suffering still from that cruel cough."

"I do not suffer much, dearest Brother Harry, though my cough does seem to be increasing. It is only what I expect, and I am so rejoiced that you are blessed with the love of that dear, true-hearted girl. I may not live to witness it long, but it adds another sparkling drop to my cup of earthly enjoyments while I do stay with you."

Harry and his grandfather rode out in the cool of the morning. Returning, they entered the breakfast-room and found Susan there alone. Col. Hunter had just bestowed his patriarchal sanction upon his grandson's choice, and now, in the simple dignity of the occasion, embraced Susan, and welcomed her to his heart and house as a beloved child.

The trembling girl was taken so entirely by surprise as to be scarcely able to recover herself from the suddenness of the salute. The poor old gentleman was completely overcome by his feelings, and found it necessary

to make a speedy retreat to the library, and Harry seeing the servants coming to finish the arrangements of the table, drew Susan into the portico.

"Why, how you tremble!" he said, as he smiled upon her blushing confusion. "I must call you Mimosa instead of Lily, I believe. You will soon learn how important a place you have consented to fill. I assure you, in the opinion of my grandfather and my Aunt Rodney, and many of their descendants, the prospective mistress of Hunter's Lodge, as you see you are regarded, is quite as august a personage as the heiress to a crown. I hope it will not seriously distress you, for I fear it is absolutely unavoidable."

"Excuse me, Harry, this time," she replied, as she returned his smile; "I really was quite unprepared for so very impressive a manifestation from Col. Hunter. I am truly grateful for his kindness, but I must have appeared like an awkward school-girl."

"Very unlike it, indeed, Lily. But I will not now tell you how you did appear in my eyes, lest I call up again the blush I love to see, for you must now go in to breakfast."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

WILLIE'S DECLINE.

"Aye, thou art for the grave; thy glances shine
Too brightly to shine long. Another Spring
Shall deck her for men's eyes, but not for thine,
Sealed in a sleep that knows no wakening.
The fields for thee have no medicinal leaf,
Nor the vexed ore a mineral of power;
And they who love thee wait in anxious grief,
Till the slow plague shall bring the fatal hour."

BRYANT.

ALL now regarded Susan as one of the family. When Harry was at home the domestic circle was incomplete without her, and in his absence her company more nearly filled the void than anything else. Col. Hunter seemed at once to have taken her into his heart, and though at first it caused some annoyance to her timidity, she became accustomed to his recognition of her as a daughter, especially as with the dignified tact of a gentleman he forbore to allude to it when any one was present beyond his own immediate family.

He took great satisfaction in directing her attention to the old portraits of his ancestors, giving her minute accounts of their characters and deeds, though it was remarked, by those familiar with the narratives, that moral reflections were more frequently intermingled than heretofore with the manifest pride of birth and station that still kindled his faded eye and cheek, as he dwelt

upon the history of each hero of his honored family line. At other times his thoughts dwelt more upon the present and future, and he would speak to his patient auditor of things to be attended to for the improvement of the estate and the comfort of the slaves, now and after he and his beloved son were gathered to their fathers. It was pleasant to notice how the spirit of his pious children had been imbibed, and exhibited itself in his increasing carefulness that the welfare of those immortal beings, over whom his control was so soon to cease, should be secured as far as depended on human agency. After various plans and suggestions, he would generally conclude by some observation of this kind:

"But, my dear, I do not wish to dictate to you and Harry. I have perfect confidence that you will regulate all these affairs much better than I can. It is only that, as the close of my stewardship draws near, I feel an increasing sorrow that I have discharged its duties so imperfectly. But Harry will carry out my wishes, and I am content. In the meantime, I am very thankful to have you both so much with me in these my last days. I hope you will not leave me, my child, as long as I continue. I already feel as if you were my own."

Whenever Susan was not thus engrossed, Willie was ready to claim her. While his father initiated her into his plans, he enlisted her in his daily pursuits. She walked or rode with him, as his strength permitted, and either read, sung, or watched with him when he was wearied. She seemed to glide in among these loving hearts without separating one from the other, sweetly filling a void unfelt before, but from which she could not now be spared.

Harry, whether at home or on the circuit, rested in

perfect peace, knowing that she was walking meekly but firmly in the path of Christian duty, wherever that path lay. He often compared the present with the past. When absent from Rose, he never had been able to divest himself of a restless anxiety about her, never feeling that she was safe from the snares of a delusive world, uncertain whether she had firmness of principle or discretion enough to guide her aright without his watchful care. At first this feeling was so tinged by bright hues as to be productive of positive pleasure. But sad experience taught him the insufficiency of his tender guardianship, and then it became so painful as to keep his mind in constant agitation. Now he reposed in the delightful assurance, that if Susan was at Forestdale, she was dispensing the light of a Christian example in the dwelling of her brother, illustrating the pleasantness of wisdom's ways by her gladdening presence, soothing the selfish irritability of her sister by acts of loving self-denial, and drawing the hearts of the little ones to her by sympathizing in their childish joys and sorrows, pointing out, as she had been herself taught at a mother's knee, the use to be made of each.

If in imagination he saw her at his own beloved home, she was serenely moving about, ameliorating the griefs or brightening the joys of each dear inmate; satisfying the long yearning of his mother's heart for a daughter's love, and sharing her watchful ministrations to the comfort of a declining father and brother. Even the servants labored in their daily routine with a more cheerful alacrity, as she bestowed a kind look or word in passing; and though they never actually betrayed their knowledge that she was to become their mistress, still there was a sensible change in the way they spoke or listened

to her, a quiet deference, a respectfulness, deeper than had been bestowed upon the playful girl with whom they had been acquainted from her infancy.

Bright as was every passing moment now to Harry and Susan, in the perfect confidence and harmony of their affection, one dark cloud still hung its pall in their horizon. Willie was again drooping. Cough and pain were wasting his strength, and he could no longer go about the circuit. This was a sad reverse, not only to Harry, but almost equally to those who had received him as a guest. At first he, too, felt it a serious privation, but it was a constant source of humble gratitude that Harry could be with him so much at home. Indeed, he became daily more ready to resign earthly enjoyments, looking forward to those at the right hand of God; to think less of himself, and more of others; less of his sufferings, and more of his blessings; less of earth, and more of heaven. He still visited the Sabbath-school, and watched over the spiritual interests of the servants with unabated solicitude.

But all the sweet endearments of love could not avert the steady progress of disease, and Willie steadily grew weaker, less able to disguise from his anxious friends that he was hastening to the tomb. In vain they looked forward to the time when the exhausting heats of summer should give place to the invigorating coolness of autumn, and breathe new life into the wasting invalid. The springs of that life were to be replenished from no earthly source. But while the clayey tenement decayed, the immortal principle within was sustained by the water of that fountain which was opened in the House of David.

It now became the great business of Willie to lead his

timid, doubting father to that fountain of living waters; to induce him to withdraw his hopes from earth, and stay himself upon the Rock of Ages.

One mild sunny day in October, he had returned fatigued from his daily drive, and slept an hour on the sofa in his sister's room. When he waked, his eyes met those of his father, fixed upon him in sad absorption, while tears were rolling down his aged cheeks.

"Dear father," he said, "why do you weep? Is it because you see me passing from a perishing inheritance to one that fadeth not away, eternal in the heavens."

"Oh, my son, my son!" was the only audible reply, and Willie continued:

"Dear father, let me entreat you to listen to the solemn voice of God, in thus rebuking the pride—the vain earthly pride of our family. You and I are the last of a long line of Hunters. What are we? Two shadows just vanishing away. What does it mean, but that the time has come for us to build upon a more solid foundation? Our ancestors have enjoyed all that this world could bestow, and perhaps they were satisfied with their portion. But what has it profited them? They are gone down to the dust. True their names were many of them enrolled among the members of the visible church, and we will hope that some of them will be found in the Lamb's book of life. But, dear father, so far as I can learn, they were men of great worldly pride, living more for the things of time and sense than to promote the glory of Him who created them, and redeemed them with his precious blood. How did they use the wealth which was committed to their care? Was it not chiefly to augment and to perpetuate their own greatness, and so foster their delusions? Father, you have

thought me too regardless of the advantages derivable from my birth. Perhaps I have been; but I was early taught to feel that I was to have here no continuing city, and I can never cease to rejoice in that affliction which bade me arise and prepare to go hence. Though I have failed to profit by the gracious dispensation as I should have done, it has kept me from building my house upon the sand. Do you not see the wisdom and love of these things?"

"Sometimes I think I do. But it is hard to realize when I look at you, my last hope, lying, here withering before my eyes, and then recall the bright promise of your childhood."

"The promise of my childhood could not compare in brightness with that which is just opening before my early manhood. And your last hope, dear father! What is that?—of dying—for you have already numbered more years than the generality of your predecessors—of dying—of going down to the silent grave, and leaving me, your only son, in possession of every means to effect my everlasting ruin? Surely that should not be your hope. You cannot expect to tarry here much longer. You often say so yourself. Would it soothe your last hours, if you were leaving me in full health, surrounded by all those snares which so often entangle the soul to its destruction? The inheritor of uncontaminated family honors, ample wealth, all the luxuries, all the refinements of life—slaves to minister to every caprice, and a heart prone to work out its own destruction with greediness? Would you prefer to leave me thus, dear father, rather than to know that I have embraced the blessed offer of salvation—eternal salvation? That I have received the title-deed to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and

that fadeth not away? I shall probably precede you to that purchased possession, but I implore you, do not let me go without a good hope of welcoming you there. Call off your mind from these deceitful hopes, and take hold of the covenant which says, 'Unto them will I give in my house and within my walls, a place and a name better than of sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off.' Is not that better than anything you lose?"

"Oh, yes. I feel it so, while you talk to me. But I shall not have you long."

"But you will have the blessed Promiser himself, and his written word, which is infinitely better. Having Christ, all things are yours. Dear father, do not lean upon anything less than the Almighty arm. That alone can sustain you."

"I know it, my son, and I do try."

"Continue to try, dear father, in faith and prayer. We are both passing away, and what a blessing it is that we leave our earthly responsibilities in such hands as those of our dear Harry and Susan. As to the poor acres, it is of little consequence, except that they may produce means to pour into the Lord's treasury; but the souls—oh, the souls! How incompetent I feel myself to discharge my obligations to them! It is a burden from which I gladly escape. Harry and Susan will lean it upon the Lord, and find rest in their labor for Him. My heart overflows with thankfulness that all things are ordered just so. But I believe I must not talk any more now. Only tell me that you will cease to think of those things that are behind, and press forward to those that are before, that endure forever."

"I will, I will, my dear Willie, and you must pray for your poor father."

"As long as I have breath or thought, I surely will."

Thus this heavenly-minded youth continued to exert his failing energies in finishing the work assigned him by his Lord, scarcely willing to allow his body the rest its feebleness claimed, lest a golden opportunity should thereby be lost, for pouring light into the sorrow-blighted heart of his beloved father. Not a friend, not even a servant, approached him in the performance of the slightest service, but was rewarded by some divine truth enforced, some holy precept made acceptable by loving looks and words.

After he became too weak to visit the cabins of the servants, it was his constant custom to send for them from time to time, and speak to them on such points of Christian faith and duty as each required; and seldom did any leave him without tears and resolutions of improvement, as well as expressions of devoted attachment to their "dying Mars Willie."

Still the steady march of the conqueror could not be stayed, and the uncomplaining invalid found himself deprived of one cherished indulgence after another. His rides in the cool mornings and evenings of summer, and then in the warm noons of autumn, must be given up. A short drive in a close carriage was all that he could bear, and even that was soon exchanged for the quiet fireside of his own room.

In patient sweetness he yielded, never seeming to look back with regret to the enjoyments he was leaving, but ever forward to those which lay before, to those mansions prepared for him in his Father's house above. The nearest approach to impatience he ever manifested was for the return of Harry or Susan, if they were absent. When again "the dear household band" was

complete, he had no more to ask, his cup of earthly bliss was full.

He still talked in tender expostulation or entreaty to his father; not because he doubted his final salvation —of that he seemed to have obtained an assurance in answer to his earnest prayers; but because he ardently longed to see him rejoicing in God; to hear him say, "Though he take away the desire of my eyes with a stroke, yet will I not mourn or weep. Even though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." He no longer sought to divert him from his afflictions, but to point out the glory that should be revealed through them, when they had accomplished the design of Him who appointed them.

Mr. Preston and Mr. Stuart frequently visited him, and with them as well as Harry, he delighted to hold high discourse on the deep things of God. His room, indeed, became a Bethel to all his Christian friends, as they listened to the sentiments of heavenly wisdom that fell from his youthful lips, and felt that while in his humility he seemed to ask instruction from them, his words of holy eloquence imparted new light and power to the truths they touched.

He never lost sight for a moment of the visible steps by which his body was descending to the dust. He marked every change, and yet with a manner so cheerful, a smile so placid, that even decay ceased to be gloomy. It was but the falling away, piece by piece, of the earthly tabernacle, showing more and more the brightness of the indwelling spirit, pluming its wings for its upward flight. There could be no gloom about him. His voice, his beaming eye, his triumphant faith were irresistible. It was not death, it was life and immortality brought to light by the Gospel.

If his father came in sadness to visit him, even he caught the happy influence, and for the time rose above the dim visions of earth, to the bright realities of heaven. Yet was he careful to guard this trembling faith from satisfying itself with the mere poetry of religion, continually presenting to his father's mind the leading points of the doctrines of grace, so clearly that he could not mistake, and joyfully Willie watched his gradual renunciation of dependence on anything less than the finished righteousness of Christ. Weak and wavering as it was, that faith was steadily becoming clearer and more abiding, and so dispelling the last cloud of care from the mind of the departing saint—the last cloud of real care, and yet there was a wish, a tender wish, that he scarce knew how to mention.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

LIFE'S CONTRASTS.

"Then before all they stand—the holy vow
And ring of gold, no fond illusions now,
Bind her as his. Across the threshold led,
And every tear kissed off as soon as shed,
His house she enters—there to be a light,
Shining within when all without is night."

ROGERS.

ONE morning, as Mrs. Bradford and Harry sat by Willie, while he rested on his favorite sofa, which had been removed to his room, he looked up with a smile, and said:

"Harry, and sister Sophy too, listen while I tell you what father and I were talking about this morning. Of course, when I am gone, you, dear Harry, will come home—that I know is settled; but it has been troubling me a little—the fear that you will let your love for me make you sad. This must not be, dear ones. I know the parting, though only for a little while, must be painful for us all; our Father wills it so for our good, but he will sanctify it. What I fear is that you will let it defer your marriage, dear Harry. Father will soon follow me, I am persuaded, and that again would be another cause of delay. Now I am convinced that neither of you wish to have your union celebrated with anything of worldly festivity. It is to be a marriage in the Lord, most emphatically, I rejoice to believe.

Would it be less conducive to His glory, less happy, if it should take place here, in this room, before I leave it? Then father and I could rejoice with you. Let us be with you. Let us be all together on that happy occasion. Susan's kind brothers and sisters have lent her to us so willingly, I feel assured they will not now refuse to give her to us a little sooner than they expected. Harry, could you and dear Lily consent to gratify us?"

Harry found it difficult to speak at the moment, but tenderly pressing the hand that was extended, he presently replied, "Dearest Willie, I think I can promise for both that you shall be gratified, but you shall soon have a more decided answer."

"Thank you, beloved brother—and you, dear sister. Will it be painful to you?"

"No, my sweet Willie, far from it. I shall prefer it to any other plan."

"How happy you make me. I did not suppose my full cup was capable of receiving so many additional drops."

Susan was at Forestdale, but the ardent desire of both father and son was soon submitted to her consideration. The time already appointed would have been not many weeks later, and before that, as Willie suggested, suffering and sorrow might overshadow all hearts. There was no sufficient reason why the wish of the venerable head of the family and its amiable heir should not be consulted. Susan was superior to all girlish affectation, and, after a brief hesitation, allowed the grateful and happy Harry to be the bearer of her cordial consent.

No other conceivable circumstance could have so far tended to counteract the melancholy of Col. Hunter as the idea that he should live to witness the marriage of him who was so soon to be his successor, his beloved

grandson—everything, save in name, that his affection or ambition could ask. Even Willie, his heart overflowing to all around, seemed to rally in anticipation of the joyful event, and entered, with lively interest, into all the simple preparations.

"Sister Sophy," he said, on the first occasion when he found her alone in his room, "I beg of you not to let this bridal be a gloomy one. Why should it? It is perfectly satisfactory to us all. Where could we find another who could so perfectly share our love with Harry? It has seemed for a long time as if they were indeed one in our hearts. Now, I have been wanting to ask you to see that the sweet girl is arrayed as so lovely a bride should be. Do not let her think she must wear sombre robes because I am sick. I desire particularly to have her dress in white. Do you not think she will indulge me?"

"If she knows it would be agreeable to you, she will, I am sure."

"Then you will ask her for me, won't you?"

"I will. But, my dear Willie, you must not expect this to be a very joyous wedding."

"Precious sister, I know you all love me too much for that. But let it at least be a happy one. If it were not to take place now, it would either have to be deferred a long time, or else, perhaps, be celebrated under circumstances sadder than these."

In accordance with Willie's wish, invitations were sent to the members of both families in Baltimore, which, however, from various causes, were declined. It was scarcely to be expected that Mrs. Rodney could so far conquer the keenness of her grief and disappointment as to make one of the guests, though it was specially

urged in a few touching lines from Willie himself. She could not; but she wrote affectionately, and promised a visit after a few weeks.

Willie, either from the unusual mildness of the season or from the pleasant emotions due to the occasion, appeared to be stronger than he had been for several weeks—brighter he could not be. If a shadow was seen stealing over any face, his smile was ready to "light up in eyes around a kindred smile." If a word involuntarily dropped, touched a chord of sorrow, instantly some happy allusion to the enduring bonds of Christian love—to the almost imperceptible lines which separate the visible from the invisible—hushed it again to peace. So constantly was this sweet influence exerted that at last all yielded to it, and felt themselves borne up—sustained by a conscious nearness to the spiritual world, a sense of the Divine presence so elevating, so comforting that thoughts of future suffering and sorrow could find no place among them.

In little more than a week from the time when it was first proposed, the little company of attached friends gathered together, just when the sun sent his latest beams through the curtained windows, in that chamber, "privileged beyond the common walks of life, quite in the verge of heaven."

The families from Gaywood, from Forestdale, from Glen Cottage, with Mr. and Mrs. Preston, were the guests. A few of the household servants, together with Jack and Letty, were admitted to witness the ceremony. All were there and waiting, when the door opened, and Harry led in his gentle bride, her slight and graceful form robed in simplest white, contrasting finely in lily-like delicacy, and mimosa-like sensitiveness with his

manly form and noble face. Mr. Preston pronounced the solemn words which made them one in the sight of God and man. And surely, never were two hearts more truly bound in unity of purpose, not only to each other but to the Lord.

The embraces, the whispered benedictions that followed, proved too much for the deeply-feeling bride, and tears were blended with smiles as she was clasped successively in the arms of parents, brothers and sisters.

The summons to a repast, suitable for the occasion, all arranged by Willie's thoughtful love, soon followed. He bade the guests a smiling good night as they retired, and then lay down to rest while they were at the table, that he might recruit for the anticipated hour of endeared family intercourse which he promised himself after the company had departed.

Mr. Allington had from the first expressed a strong desire to celebrate his sister's nuptials in the usual way, by a large dinner-party or *infair*, according to the idiom of Virginia, at his house. He considered that enough had been conceded to the declining state of Col. Hunter and his son, by, as he expressed it, "the humdrum style in which the affair was got up." It was not at all to his taste. He was much elated that his sister had borne off the finest match in the county, and so far as he could control it, there should be fitting demonstrations of rejoicing on the part of relations and friends in the neighborhood. Mrs. Carter and others would gladly have coöperated with him and his pleasure-loving wife in carrying out the plan; but a little clearer perception of what was due to the feelings of the family, made them proceed more cautiously than he would have done.

Mr. Allington first mentioned his wishes to Mrs. Car-

ter, whose love of old Virginia usages made her lend a willing ear, and together they ventured to intimate their views to Willie, knowing that thus far all the arrangements had been made in accordance with his wishes. He at once replied, that as he could not himself be a partaker in anything of the kind, he could have nothing to say, except that anything contributing to the happiness of Harry and Susan would be perfectly satisfactory to him.

Accordingly, before the company separated after supper, Mr. Allington commenced with Susan. The mere mention of anything of the kind was distressing to her, and while she was unable to contend with the volubility of her brother, Harry caught the troubled expression of her face, and came to learn the cause. Mr. Allington immediately turned to him, but met no more encouragement. Besides the incongruity of mirth and feasting while Willie was so near the confines of the eternal world, neither Harry nor Susan had any inclination for such scenes. They read in each other's eyes a perfect agreement, and Mr. Allington was constrained to yield the point, which he did with the better grace, notwithstanding his vexation, on account of the sweetness of manner accompanying the refusal. Even if there had been no cloud of sorrow impending over these loving hearts, each would have found the other sufficient for its happiness; but to leave the hallowed atmosphere around the couch of their beloved departing Willie for the gay and thoughtless crowd at a large dinner-party, where they would be expected to enter into its mirthful spirit, was utterly repugnant to their feelings. The subject was no more mentioned.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE LAST OF THE HUNTERS.

"His sufferings ended with the day,
Yet lived he at its close,
And breathed the long, long night away,
In statue-like repose.
But when the sun, in all his state,
Illum'd the eastern skies,
He pass'd through glory's morning gate,
And walked in Paradise."

JAMES ALDRICH.

FOR a few days, the animated interest with which Willie had entered into the happiness of his friends had borne him up against the pressure of disease; but when all was quiet again, and Harry began to talk of circuit duties and circuit business, his temporary strength gave way, and he perceptibly declined.

Two or three of his appointments Harry could fill without being absent many hours. But when it became necessary to prolong that absence for nearly two weeks, he felt that he could not throw himself heart and soul into his work as he was accustomed to, so long as he knew his presence at home was absolutely required, in order to relieve his grandfather's restless anxiety about the daily business of the estate.

With characteristic tenderness for others, Willie had urged him to take Susan with him; and most gladly would he have complied, but he knew how important she was to all at home, and cheerfully denied himself, rather

than abstract one ray from their sunshine; and still, when the venerable walls of his home were hid in the distance, the young husband might well be pardoned, had the sigh which burst from his full heart been only for the sweet wife he left behind. But it was not so. He sighed for others more than for himself. He thought of his mother's ceaseless care for all; of the love with which she would strive to bear the burden of his lack of service, rather than let it press too heavily on others. He thought of the kindred spirit that would actuate his own sweet Lily, to prevent her from exhausting herself in these offices of affection. Then the bowed form of his grandfather would mingle in the vision, wearily moving about to look after business that he could attend to for him with so much ease. But above all, he thought of the sweet, patient smile, and grateful words of the dying one, as servants rendered those needful attentions which he coveted for his own loving share. It was less by any complaining at his departure, than by the speechless, subduing joy that hailed his return, that he knew how much he had been missed.

Under these circumstances, it will easily be imagined that Harry was not surprised to receive a note from his presiding elder informing him of the necessity for him to be at home, and authorizing him to resign his place to a young brother, the bearer of the communication, who was expecting to present himself to the conference the next spring.

Mr. Preston, whose field of labor was at no great distance, had called to see Willie a few days after Harry left, and finding him so much lower than he appeared at the time of the marriage, was instantly and forcibly struck with the fact, that the time had come when Har-

ry's place was no longer to be the itinerant field; that he was now called to a different kind of labor for the same Master, and that he must immediately enter upon its duties. After a short consultation with Mrs. Bradford and Susan, he wrote to the brother who had succeeded him in the eldership, and left all hearts lightened by its perusal before the letter was sent. This was inclosed to Harry in the one that authorized his return.

Long as it had been foreseen, this summons was received by Harry with conflicting emotions. He was now to turn his back upon that life, the call to which he had received with such joyful ardor, and to which he had, in infancy, been devoted by his pious parents. But a higher than earthly parents now reversed the call; and though some painful regrets could not but mingle with his submission, he did not suffer them long to stay his thoughts from his onward path. It lay straight before him; and after an hour's meditation and prayer, he was ready to walk in it, saying—"Here am I, send me upon whatever mission will best promote thy glory." The sentence having gone forth that here his itinerant life was to end, he was quickly in the saddle, his heart going before to the dear home-circle where he was loved and longed for.

Whatever of bitterness remained in Harry's grief at leaving his chosen field of labor was greatly mitigated by the comfort thereby bestowed upon the sorrowing watchers of Willie's slow but steady decline. Nothing now remained for this attached family but to sustain and cheer each other in the last sweet offices of love to him who was so soon to leave them. He leaned not upon earthly supports, though fully and tenderly appreciating the minutest act of loving care from those about him. His joy as well as his strength, had a deeper source. Not

for an instant did a cloud mar his peace, or obscure that vision of glory opening before him. His great object was to prepare the mind of his father to resign at once the last hope of an unbroken earthly line, and to rejoice in seeing it transferred to a world where there is no death, no broken hopes, no fading inheritance.

"Dear father," he said, with animation, "how happy we are! So many of those we love are awaiting us on the other side of the river. There is Sister Sophy's blessed mother, and mine, with all our little brothers, and we know not how many more that have gone before. What a bright company! In faith I can see them with their robes made white in the blood of the Lamb. Oh! father, do you not long to go and help them to praise the loving Saviour?"

"Ah, my son! if I could see them as you do—but it is not for me. You are young, and your life has been so pure. I shall never be as fit as you are to join that song."

"Oh, do not say so!" cried Willie, greatly distressed. "I am not pure, no child of Adam is pure. We are all unclean. What would become of my soul if it should have to appear before God in judgment out of Christ, in its own naked depravity. Oh, the thought is awful!" And he covered his agitated features with his hands.

But it lasted only a moment. Looking up with his usual calmness, "Dear father," he added, "I am sure you love me too much ever again to speak of purity or fitness to a poor mortal about to appear before a God of infinite holiness. Think of me, and speak of me only as a sinner saved by grace." Then clasping his hands, and looking up with a countenance radiant with holy joy, he repeated the words:

"Hail! hail! all hail!—
All hail, ye blood-washed throng,
Saved by grace!
I come to join—
To join your rapturous song;
Saved by grace:
All, all is peace, and joy divine,
And heaven and glory now are mine
Loud hallelujahs to the Lamb!
All is well."

The poor father listened and wept, for his heart could not yet loose its hold upon the earthly life of this beloved son—this last of the Hunters. Thus Willie continued his efforts to pour light and consolation into the wounded heart, sustained himself by an unwavering assurance that when he was gone, that heart would rest its sorrows on the Rock of Ages. For the others he had no care, he knew their hearts were knit to his in the strong bonds of human love, but he also knew that their eyes of faith were fixed upon the same glorious abode to which he was hastening; that they realized the certainty of reunion when after a few more days had been spent in the Master's vineyard, they should hear the welcome summons, "It is enough. Come up higher."

Softly, almost imperceptibly, the stern messenger was doing his work—loosening thread after thread of the silver cord, with a touch so gentle as never to disturb the sweet peace of these last earthly communings. Day after day, week after week, this lovely Christian youth felt himself gliding down the stream of life, his heart full of thankfulness, and his lips overflowing with praise that he was free from pain, surrounded by every circumstance that could make death easy to the wasting body, and in possession of a full assurance of an abundant entrance

into the kingdom of his Lord. Often after conversing with Christian friends, uniting with them in prayer, or mingling his voice, still clear and sweet, in the songs of Zion, he would exclaim with glistening eyes,

> "And if our fellowship below
> In Jesus be so sweet,
> What heights of rapture shall we know
> When round his throne we meet!"

Whether it was the natural progress of the disease, or whether his sensitive frame had received some slight cold, was uncertain, but for a few days his cough became more troublesome, attended by imperfect chills, and increasing paroxysms of fever. This caused an increase of physical suffering, but was powerless to quench the living brightness of the spirit which ever beamed forth in love to all around. If too weak to form words, his caressing gestures, accompanied by patient smiles, were ever ready to check the tear of sympathy, and cheer the drooping spirit.

Then an interval of comparative ease followed when the powers of life seemed to rally. He felt that it might be the last, and resolutely devoted it to seeing and speaking once more to such of his friends as had not yet given their hearts to God. His sister Virginia with her husband were repeatedly summoned to sit beside the sofa where he usually passed the day, and listen to his loving expostulations and earnest entreaties. Their children, too, he loved to call around him, to take their little plump rosy hands in his slender, waxen fingers while they stood with softened hearts and wondering eyes listening to the instruction so well adapted to each capacity.

Not a servant on the place but was remembered, and received from his beloved lips some simple text, some holy lesson, to be treasured up, as their dying Master Willie's last words to them. Old Jack and Letty, with others of tried fidelity, sought every opportunity to gain admittance to his room, where they were always welcome, and always furnished with some crumbs of the heavenly manna to strengthen them on their pilgrimage to that land where, he loved to remind them, all distinctions will be done away and all be one in Christ.

A wonderful renewal of strength seemed to be bestowed upon him, till he had thus performed the duty which lay so near his heart, then another day of conflict with the dissolving vase of earth left him at night utterly exhausted. He sunk into a sleep so profound as at times to startle his anxious friends, and make them think that death had indeed fixed his everlasting seal upon his marble features, but again a long sobbing breath would assure them that the spirit still clung to its house of clay.

Colonel Hunter had sat all day by his side, except when at short intervals he had been persuaded away by his children, for the relief both of himself and the patient sufferer, who could more easily endure his own conflict with the king of terrors than the sight of his poor father's agony. As the night wore on, Harry had induced his grandfather to lie down in the next room, where he yielded to the overpowering weariness of age and sorrow in a quiet sleep. Harry then gently withdrew his hand from his loosening grasp, and returned to the scene where all their interests centered.

Willie still lay calm and lovely, as if chiselled in purest marble, his delicate features expressing only peace

and rest. No pain, no anxiety marred the placid smile that hovered about his lips, as Mrs. Bradford, Harry and Susan together kept their vigil of love.

> "They watched his breathing through the night
> His breathing soft and low,
> As in his breast the wave of life
> Kept heaving to and fro."

Scarcely withdrawing their eyes from the beloved face, except to steal a glance at each other as the change from almost breathless repose to a quick heaving of the laboring breast thrilled their waiting hearts. When the cold light of the wintry morning came stealing in, dimming the rays of the night lamp, Willie was still there, but apparently just hovering on the brink of Jordan, never again they feared to speak a cheering word to their sad hearts. But it was otherwise ordered. As the daylight increased, he calmly opened his eyes, looked from one to another, smiled faintly, and then closed them again. He lay still; his lips moved as if in prayer. Suddenly his features lighted up. He held out his hand, saying in a voice full and clear:

"Farewell, beloved ones; farewell to earth, to sin and sorrow. I am almost home. I have had a blessed vision of that home, but I have not strength to tell you. Do not weep for me, precious sister, sweet Susan; all is well. Harry, dearest Harry, how dearly I love you all."

His voice had sunk to a whisper, and again he lay still, but when his sister put a cup to his lips, he drank and seemed refreshed. With a smile of great sweetness he looked at Susan and said, "Sing, dear."

"What shall I sing, dear Willie?"

"Something about death and heaven."

Susan gathered up her strength as well as she could, and with Harry's help sung:

"And let this feeble body fail."

The singing wakened Colonel Hunter, who came in before they finished, and took his accustomed place by the pillow. When they ceased, Willie said: "That is beautiful; I have always loved it, and yet my soul wants something deeper—something about the blood that cleanses from all sin,"

They sung—

"There is a fountain filled with blood."

Once or twice he essayed to join his voice to the swelling notes, but finding it impossible, he lay quiet till it was ended. "That is delightful," he said; "I shall soon sing the song of the redeemed. But those are man's words. Now, Harry, let me have some of God's words, and then pray once more, for I must soon be gone."

Harry repeated text after text, and Willie listened with kindling eye, evidently appreciating every word. To the prayer he responded from time to time, in impressive whispers, and at its close, breathed a few short but comprehensive petitions for the beloved ones about him, especially for his father, whose hand he held. Then looking round once more, and smiling upon each, he said:

"Nothing but the blood of atonement. That is all-sufficient." He paused as if he had not finished the sentence, closed his eyes, and seemed to sleep.

All sat in breathless silence waiting to catch the next words, till a gleam of the rising sun gilded the pillow. Harry moved to intercept the rays, lest they should disturb the sleeper. The tender caution was unnecessary. Willie had become one of those who "shall hunger no

more; neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." So gentle was the transition, that it might truly be said:

> "They thought him dying when he slept,
> And sleeping when he died."

As soon as it became known to all that the object of their love had passed beyond the reach of their care, tears and sobs broke the long silence of that watch. Colonel Hunter rose and stood for some moments gazing at the lifeless form of his son. Then, with a burst of tears, he clasped the body in his arms, sobbing out:

"Gone—gone. All gone! Oh, my son! my only son, take me with you, for I have no more a place, nor a habitation on earth."

But the voice that had always responded in words of loving consolation or persuasion, was silent. Laying him softly back on the pillows, he struggled with his emotion, saying:

"The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away." He stopped, then resumed: "Yes, sainted spirit—I can say it—blessed be the name of the Lord."

Stooping over the bed once more, he kissed the cold lips again and again, turned away, leaned heavily upon Harry's shoulder, and said: "We will go now, but I will see him again."

Harry led him to his chamber, where he meekly suffered himself to be undressed, and went to bed. Harry sat by him till exhausted nature sunk to repose. Then leaving him to the care of his mother, he went to see that the last offices were performed for the departed.

Finding him on his return still sleeping, he persuaded his mother and Susan, who had joined her, to lie down. They reluctantly consented, and he resumed his station by his grandfather, whose sleep seemed lighter now.

He occasionally looked up, and seeing who sat beside him put out his hand.

"Harry, my son," he murmured, "you will not forget your promise. When you have a son let him be called"—he paused, and his mind seemed to wander. "Yes, his name was Willie; I know it, it was never changed. He is gone. But your son, Harry. 'The Lord bless the lad, and let my name be named upon him, and the name of my fathers.'"

Harry bent forward to catch the words. Putting his trembling hand fondly on his grandson's head, he repeated slowly and solemnly,

"You promise, Harry."

"Yes, dear grandfather, I will remember your wish and fulfill it, if God permits."

"Then I am satisfied. That is all I want of earth. Harry, I have found Jesus, who is better than sons and daughters. He has pardoned all my sins. Now kiss me, and I will sleep, for I am very weary."

Scarcely had Harry time to comply with the affectionate request, before his breathing indicated that he was already asleep. So he lay till evening. His children, by turns, watched him. As it began to grow dark, Harry came in, followed by a servant with a light.

"How is he now, mother?"

"Very comfortable, I think; his breathing is quite easy."

Harry approached the bed. He put his ear close to his face—there was no sound. He touched his brow—it was icy cold. He, too, was gone!

CHAPTER XXXIX.

MASTER OF HUNTER'S LODGE.

"When obstacles and trials seem
Like prison walls to be,
I do the little I can do,
And leave the rest to Thee."

THE lights that had been burning all night in the large drawing-room at the Lodge, were still casting their rays over the massive furniture, and touching the points of the elaborate carving of olden times, though morning was looking sadly in through the openings of the heavy curtains. The dark forms of its successive proprietors, with their fair companions, were all assembled, and their eyes seemed, from their lofty positions on the walls, to take solemn cognizance of the unusual scene below; some quietly and complacently, others gloomily and haughtily, as was their wont. Each in turn had lain powerless under the hand of the conqueror in that room, and had been borne away in solemn pomp to the dark vault, to mingle with the common earth; but never before had two of that long line been seen as now, lying side by side in the dreamless sleep of death.

There they lay, father and son. The one a frame of great original size and strength, with a brow of lofty command, but seamed by age and sorrow. The other a fragile youth, in stature scarcely more than a child,

but with a countenance of inexpressible sweetness—a smile that death itself had failed to quench.

There they lay, and beside them stood the reluctant heir of their wealth, their honors, their responsibilities, but not their name. There he stood, his spirit again bowed down under a sense of the weighty requirements of his new position. His exhausted physical energies produced their mysterious corresponding action on his mind, revealing to him only the gloomier aspect of the future. Thus he stood, leaning over the cold remains of his beloved relatives, with vain longings to call them back again to the inheritance upon which he so dreaded to enter. He bent his face down to that of his beloved Willie, as if to hear the tones of love and resignation so often poured from those lips of marble.

So profound were his emotions of grief and gloomy apprehension, that he heard not a light footstep, nor was conscious of living presence till he felt a gentle touch upon his arm. He raised his head and met the soft eyes of his fair wife, full of tears of tender sympathy. He folded her to his breast in silence for a moment, and then whispered,

"My love, my sweet pale Lily, why did you not sleep longer?"

"I have slept much longer than you have, dear Harry; you forget your own health in caring for others. I must look after you, or you will be really sick."

"I think not; but I cannot sleep. Oh, my Lily, the burden which has fallen upon me presses me to the earth."

"But, Harry, it has not *fallen* upon you, has it?"

Harry did not answer. The vision of the old nurse was forcibly recalled to his mind, though the surround-

ings were sadly different. But the hair of shadowy gold lay upon his bosom, where all the lights seemed to centre, and the knowledge that it was all his own soothed his perturbed spirit. He rested his cheek on the fair head, and listened as she went on :

"The burden has not *fallen* upon you, it has only been gently *laid* upon you, accompanied by the loving injunction, 'Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee.'"

"Go on, sweet wife, your words are a heaven-sent medicine for my soul. How can I despond or grieve at any dispensation of Providence while I possess you, my precious comforter and teacher?"

"How can you say so, dear Harry, when my strength is to lean in conscious weakness on you? These are the same medicines so often administered by you, to me and others, and they are just as efficacious as ever."

"Let us, love, continue to lean on each other, and then lean our mutual weakness on the Rock that is higher and stronger than we. But go on, give me your comments on the text."

"They must be still the same that you have so often given to others. If the burden is of our Father's imposing, it is sent because he has some wise and gracious purpose to accomplish, and honors you by using you as his instrument. Are you not willing to be so used?"

"More than willing, Lily—joyful, thankful. I rebel no longer, but submit to his sovereign disposal. 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do.' How could I be faithless even for a passing moment? And you, my blessed wife, the burden rests as heavily on you as on me, for well do I know how unselfishly you will go forth to the work of ministering to the souls and bodies of these poor

slaves, and how nobly your Christian example will reprove me when I falter as I did but now."

"You will not falter, my Harry, for you will draw your strength from a source that never fails."

"Yes, dearest; even now, in this solemn presence—the presence of death—let us ask for strength to do and suffer the will of our Divine Master."

Close beside those lifeless forms, they together renewed the consecration of themselves, body, soul, and spirit, to the service of Him who created them and redeemed them, who had given them to each other, and committed to them the care of so many souls. Earnestly did they pray for those poor dependent creatures, for grace to watch over all their interests, temporal and spiritual, and for the speedy opening of some way by which both master and slave should receive their freedom.

Having brought our young friends to the threshold of that life of care and responsibility, to which, in the providence of God, they were called, we leave them, confident that having begun in the principles of the doctrine of Christ, they will go on unto perfection. A few glances at their onward path may be acceptable to those whose patience has carried them through the foregoing pages.

Though withdrawn from the itinerant field, by order of the great Captain of the hosts, the young soldier of the cross laid not aside his armor, but found enough to employ all his ransomed powers in the new field. With the zealous and efficient coöperation of a Christian wife and mother, he resolutely and cheerfully addressed himself to the work.

He erected, on his ample estate, a house of worship, large enough to contain all his own dependents, and as

many others as desired to attend. In the intervals between the stated appointments of the circuit preachers, he filled the pulpit himself, and so attractive as well as faithful was his ministry, that crowds of all denominations flocked to hear the message of peace from his lips; and many a star will be found glittering in his crown of rejoicing, that moved in a different earthly orbit.

He soon commenced the experiment suggested by Susan, of employing his slaves for stated wages; and though often discouraged by adverse circumstances, persevered in faith and prayer, till complete success crowned his efforts. Sustained by his manly strength of character, mingled as it was with cherishing tenderness, the gentle, timid Susan, proved herself an able auxiliary in all his benevolent enterprises; finding a happiness beyond her brightest anticipations in the contemplation of his Christian virtues, and in possessing the deep, abiding affection of his noble heart.

In possession of every earthly blessing, Mrs. Bradford's life glided on. Happy in the unbounded love and respect of her children, her presence heightened the joys, and ameliorated the sorrows, of all around her. Even Mrs. Rodney, when the grave had closed over the last direct heir, in the male line, of her family honors, began more fully to appreciate the excellences of those upon whom those honors had descended. Bitter as was her disappointment in the failure of all her endeavors to induce Harry to lay aside the name of his father and assume that of her family, she found consolation in the birth of a little David Hunter, who, she was assured, should, if his life was spared, take the name of his ancestors; and, in her fond imagination, inherit all their greatness.

If any who stand in a similar position to that of our

young friends, should feel sufficient interest in this simple narrative, to inquire farther how they carried out their resolutions towards the unfortunate beings thus placed at their disposal, let them proceed on the same principles adopted by Harry and Susan; seek light and assistance from the same source, leaning on the same almighty arm, and they will not only find the most conclusive and satisfactory answer to their question, but be far better qualified to instruct others than the humble writer of these pages, who here bids them farewell, and "God-speed," in their labor of love.

THE END.

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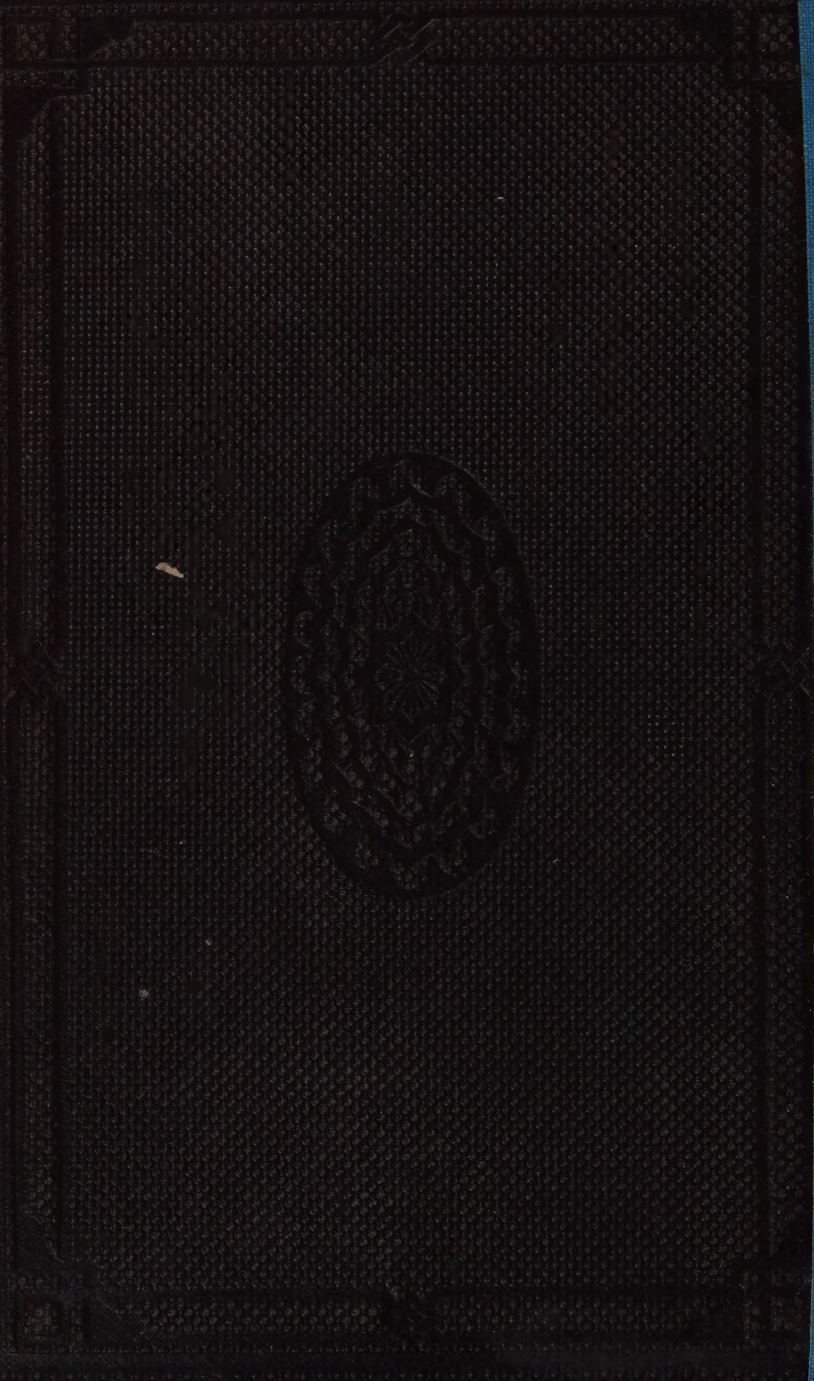
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